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REMAKING LEGACY

Railway cuisine and its regional makeover

Through customised menus, Indian Railways is trying to cater to a very discerning clientele. Will it pay off?

MAGAZINE» PAGE 1

The Dalai Lama: Straddling the spiritual and the political

PROFILES » PAGE 13

'I feel the people's pulse, and I am sure we will come to power'

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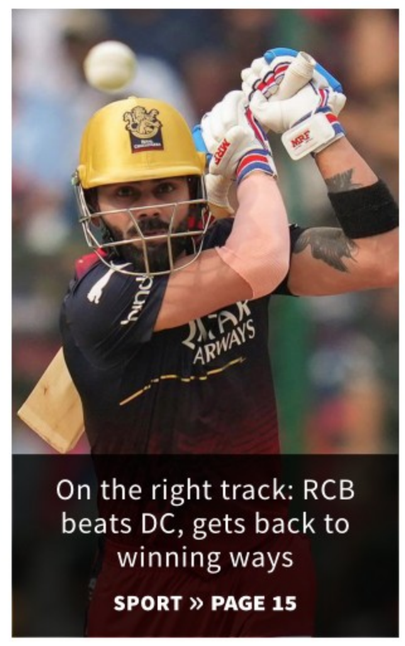

On the right track: RCB beats DC, gets back to winning ways

SPORT » PAGE 15

Top-notch toilets to usher in change

The Centre has asked cities and towns to ensure a share of luxurious restrooms, with features like bathing cubicles and touchless flushing

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A quarter of all new public restrooms in Indian cities will soon have high-end features such as luxurious bath cubicles, touchless flushing, breast-feeding rooms, and automatic sanitary napkin incinerators. These will be indicated as "aspirational toilets" on Google Maps.

"A directive has been sent to all State governments to ensure that henceforth 25% of public toilet seats added in any city or urban unit are 'aspirational toilets'," sources in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs said.

The high-end public conveniences may also have attached libraries, cafes, and shopping complexes to help raise funds for their maintenance and upkeep.

The focus areas to construct these luxury restrooms will be tourist and religious destinations, as well as iconic cities. In these cities, places with a high footfall – markets, railway stations, inter-State bus depots and National Highways – will be given preference. The idea is to ensure the presence of such conveniences in places where people are likely to spend over three hours at a stretch.

Guidelines issued to the States say that the bathrooms will need to be stain- and graffiti-free, have low height toilets and basins for children, a well-maintained patch of greenery around them, hand-dryers and paper napkins readily available, along with vending machines for sanitary napkins. An SMS-based feedback mechanism for users must also be put in place.

These facilities may have attached libraries, cafes etc. to help raise funds for their upkeep.

Exploring business models

The Ministry has decided to engage start-ups that can build such toilets across the country. A team of experts from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur has been entrusted with the task of screening and evaluating the proposals of these start-ups. So far, 75 companies have been shortlisted, out of which 30 proposals have been finalised. The pilot project will be rolled out by October 2024, the sources said.

One of the business models being explored for the maintenance of these toilets is attaching them with other public services, such as restaurants, shopping malls, libraries, cinema halls, or even medicine shops, to make them self-sustaining.

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Opposition targets Modi over Satya Pal Malik's claims on Pulwama attack

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Satya Pal Malik was the J&K Governor during the Pulwama terror attack

Opposition parties on Saturday targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi over former Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Governor Satya Pal Malik's allegations, including one in which he claimed that Mr. Modi had asked him to keep quiet after Mr. Malik told him that the Pulwama terror strike happened because the Centre did not provide aircraft to transport CRPF jawans from Jammu to Srinagar despite intelligence inputs about threats.

Mr. Malik, who was the J&K Governor during the Pulwama terror attack, made several explosive comments as part of an hour-long interview with journalist Karan Thapar for *The Wire* in which he described Mr. Modi as "ill-informed" about J&K. The former Governor also said that the Pulwama attack was used for political benefit and added that even the National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval advised him to remain silent.

CONTINUED ON
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Shettar says he will quit BJP and also as MLA

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Jagadish Shettar PTI

In another blow to the BJP in poll-bound Karnataka, former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar late on Saturday said that he would quit BJP and also resign as MLA on Sunday. He had been unhappy over being told by the party to step aside from electoral politics and had been insisting that he be allowed to run for elections for one more term.

This comes a day after former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi also quit the party over being denied the party ticket to contest the next elections. He is now contesting on the Congress ticket.

Mr. Shettar announced his decision on Saturday after a meeting with party leaders, including Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, and Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Pralhad Joshi, failed to yield any results.

He said those who were afraid of his possible claim for the Chief Minister's post in future were the reason for his ill-treatment, Mr. Shettar said.

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NEARBY

Chilume: Probe rules out electoral fraud

BENGALURU
The investigation into the alleged voter data theft by Chilume Educational Cultural and Rural Development Trust has ruled out any electoral fraud or manipulation of electoral roll in the three constituencies. » Page 3

OCI status of actor Chetan cancelled

BENGALURU
The Overseas Citizen of India status of actor Chetan Kumar has been cancelled by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The actor has been critical of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and has been arrested twice for his tweets.

» Page 2

The spot where Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf Ahmed were shot dead in Prayagraj on Saturday night. V. V. KRISHNAN

Ex-MP Atiq, brother Ashraf shot dead

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Criminal-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother Khalid Azim alias Ashraf were shot dead by three assailants in Prayagraj on Saturday night, while being escorted by about a dozen police personnel for a routine medical check-up. The former Samajwadi Party MP, 62, was killed hours after the last rites of his son Asad Ahmed, who was gunned down in a police encounter in Jhansi two days ago.

The Prayagraj shooting took place around 10.30 p.m. and was captured live on camera, as mediapersons were following the handcuffed duo being taken to Calvin Hospital.

Police Commissioner Ramit Sharma said the assailants had come on motorcycles posing as mediapersons. They were able to get near the duo on the pretext of recording a sound bite and fired at them from close range. Mr. Ahmed and his brother sustained bullet injuries on the head and were declared dead by doctors later in the night. The U.P. Police detained three alleged assailants, identified as Navin Tiwari, Arun Maurya and Sonu, on the spot and seized three firearms.

CONTINUED ON
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No Kolar ticket for Siddaramaiah

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The third list of candidates released by Congress, a day ahead of party leader Rahul Gandhi's visit to Kolar, ended the speculation on the possibility of former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah contesting from a second constituency.

He has not been named as candidate for Kolar, which means that his single constituency will remain Varuna in Mysuru district.

The list that contains 43 names of candidates and which was released on Saturday has in it Laxman Savadi who on Friday left the BJP to join the Congress. Now, the grand old party has to name candidates for 15 more constituencies.

BSY's kin in JD(S) list

The Janata Dal (Secular) too released its list on Saturday and among those named include N.R. Santhosh, a relative of the former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, who will contest from Arsikere.

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CLASSIFIEDS » PAGES 2 & 4
MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES

Winged wonder: Flamingos gathered near a prominent residential building (NRI Complex) in Navi Mumbai. They have shown a remarkable ability to adapt to their changing environment. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Flight of fancy: A flock soars over a residential colony in Nerul, Navi Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Aqua ballerinas: Flamingos at DPS Lake in Nerul. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Pink flamboyance

Thousands of flamingos come to Navi Mumbai and Thane Creek every year and have shown resilience in the face of burgeoning construction projects in the area

Every winter, thousands of greater and lesser flamingos fly into Mumbai, forming a sea of pink against a backdrop of skyscrapers, bridges and oil refineries along the 26-km-long Thane Creek, the DPS lake in Nerul and Sewri.

These migratory birds generally fly from Kutch in Gujarat and the Sambhar Lake in Rajasthan to Mumbai during winter around mid-November, but due to prolonged rain and other climate factors, their arrivals can been delayed. And when they do come, they are here till May, or sometimes, even till the start of the monsoon in mid-June in Mumbai.

Last year, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) conducted a survey in which approximately 1,33,000 flamingos were observed across the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary, Sewri, Nhava and adjacent zones.

Flamingos feed on the algae that dwell in the mudflats at Navi Mumbai, Airoli and Thane Creek, and it is the carotenoid pigment in algae that gives flamingos their pretty pink colour.

Many wildlife experts feared that recent construction activities around Sewri and Thane Creek such as the Sewri-Nhava Sheva bridge and other such projects would pose a threat to the ecosystem, and that the numbers of flamingos who migrate would come down.

But surprisingly, the flamingos have adapted to the conditions much better as many of them can be seen flying past the construction projects and even be found sitting a few hundred yards from the sites.

Pretty in pink: A young resident of Navi Mumbai against the backdrop of a public wall painting promoting flamingo conservation. RITU RAJ KONWAR

OCI status of actor Chetan cancelled weeks after arrest over Hindutva tweet

The actor has been asked to submit his Overseas Citizen of India card in the next 15 days

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) status of actor Chetan Kumar has been cancelled by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The actor has been critical of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and has been arrested twice for his tweets: recently for his tweets critical of Hindutva and once earlier for his comments on the judiciary.

"This is a vindictive act of the Union government to silence all activists and critics to create an environment of fear. I will fight this and not let it go. I have decided to file a writ petition in Karnataka High Court challenging the order soon," Mr. Kumar told *The Hindu*.

Chetan Kumar was born in the United States of America to Indian parents, and is a US citizen. But he holds OCI status, which provides for effective permanent residence to persons of Indian origin. While this doesn't mean he is an Indian citizen, he need not avail of a visa every time he visits India and reports to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) and the police.

> The Ministry of Home Affairs accuses me of 'promoting ill will, hatred, & disharmony against a particular community.' Not true. Our fight against the system means dismantling birthright-based hierarchy, Brahminism — not against any caste/community. Our equalitarian icons taught us that power structure always retaliates.
>
> **CHETAN KUMAR**
> actor, activist

Mr. Kumar has been mostly based out of Bengaluru since the late 2000s, and has been starring in Kannada films and working as an activist taking up several causes.

He landed in a legal soup for the first time in 2021 when Vishwa Hindu Parishad functionaries lodged a complaint against his critical remarks on Brahminism. This led to multiple FIRs against him in Basavanagudi and Cubbon Park police stations. A VHP functionary had then written to FRRO asking them to cancel his OCI status. He again got into trouble, this time was arrested, over a tweet criticising a Karnataka High Court judge in February 2022 and again arrested in March 2023 over his tweets criticizing Hindutva.

Mr. Kumar was served a show-cause notice as to why his OCI status shouldn't be cancelled in June 2022, to which he responded. The FRRO order cancelling his OCI status that Mr. Kumar received on Friday, a copy of which *The Hindu* has accessed states: "...Mr. Chetan A. Kumar has been involved in many unlawful activities such as making derogatory, insulting and objectionable remarks against public institutions, promoting ill will, hatred and disharmony against a particular community. He violated COVID-19 guidelines issued by Government of Karnataka and posted derogatory remarks on Twitter about the Honorable judges of Karnataka High Court... The activities of Mr. Chetan A. Kumar are inimical to the interest of the general public".

The order further directs Mr. Kumar to submit his OCI Card at the FRRO office in the next 15 days, failing which also it would be considered cancelled.

In his tweet posted on March 20, Mr. Kumar had stated that Hindutva was an ideology "built on lies" and cited the examples of Savarkar, Babri Masjid as well as Uri Gowda and Nanje Gowda. He also tweeted that Hinduvta could be defeated by truth and that "truth is equality".

Based on a complaint, Mr. Kumar was arrested by the Seshadripuram police on March 21 and charged under sections 295A and 505(2) of the IPC.

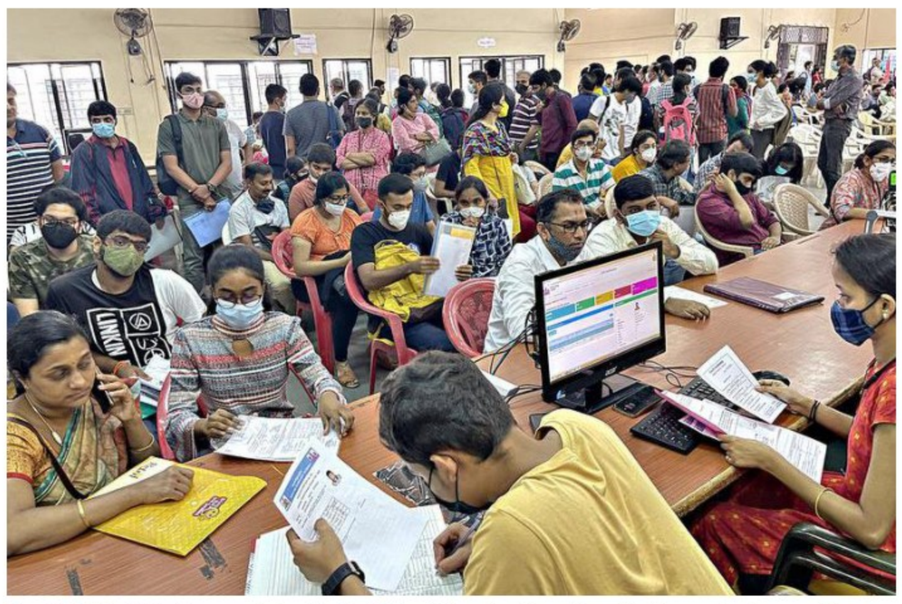
This year, no 'GetCETgo' online course for CET, JEE, NEET aspirants in State

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The State government has abruptly stopped the 'GetCETgo' free online crash course, which was helpful to aspirants of Common Entrance Test (CET), Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), this year. The programme that had come in handy for rural and poor students who can't afford training classes for these entrance examinations. The move to stop it has drawn their ire.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai had in his 2022-23 Budget speech promised CET and NEET training centres in every taluk, which has also not materialised. This year, even the Department of Pre-University Education (DPUE) has also not taken any initiative towards training students for these entrance exams to secure seats for professional courses.

The GetCETgo initiative was started by the Higher Education Department in the academic year of 2019-20. This crash course was available for all the registered students through the website, YouTube channel and on the Android app. The course had content like comprehensive study material in the form of synopsis, practice questions, chapter wise tests, mock tests and revision videos. There was also a helpline to clear doubts. Starting from April 10, it would go on till all entrance exams were over in June or July that year. The course had a good response and nearly 2 lakh students enrolled for it every year. However, the government has abruptly stopped this course this year.



The GetCETgo initiative was started by the Higher Education Department in the academic year of 2019-20. Nearly two lakh students enrolled for it every year. FILE PHOTO

"I am an aspirant for a medical course this year. Coming from a lower middle class family, I cannot afford tuitions. I was waiting for the GetCETgo online free crash course. I am very disappointed with the government's move to discontinue the programme. GetCETgo was the only resort for lakhs of students like me to prepare for the CET and NEET exam. Now I dont know what to do," said Sharath, a II PU student from Bengaluru.

"The free online crash course was really helpful for rural students. In many taluks and even district centres, there are no CET, NEET tuitions. We have to go to Bengaluru, where GetCETgo filled a gap. Last year, one of my relatives used it to crack NEET successfully. It is shameful that the government discontinued it. We demand it be reintroduced immediately," said Basavaraj, a parent of a II PU student from Maddur.

A senior official from the Higher Education Department said the programme should have been continued. "Data shows that 48% of the government quota medical seats are grabbed by CBSE and ICSE students. In this light, the online crash course was really helpful for state syllabus students," he said.

Online part-time job scam cases rising; four cases reported on Friday alone

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

On Friday alone, four individuals filed complaints with the city's cyber crime police that they had been lured by cyber criminals promising part-time jobs online and cheated them of their money.

The police who are trying to track down the accused, said that increasingly educated people are falling into the trap, despite awareness campaigns about such cyber frauds.

Modus operandi

A person approaches the victim on social media or on instant messaging apps offering lucrative returns on money for a set of online tasks including subscribing to YouTube videos and the like. Initially, fraudsters give back good returns luring the victim further and once they make a big investment, they turn incommunicado. The Cyber Crime Police have appealed to people not to fall into this trap, a new modus operandi that seems to be in vogue in the city of late.

First incident

Pawan Kumar Jalwadi, a 34-year-old engineer, complained to the Whitefield Cyber Crime Station on Friday that he was lured by conman who made away with his savings worth ₹12,35,000. Mr. Kumar said he was approached by one Shristi Yadav on social media and offered a part time job with an exciting offer. She also told him about online trading and few tasks to complete following which the money would be doubled within hours. Pawan followed her instructions initially and got a good return on his investment. Little did he know that it was a trap laid to lure him to invest more. Once he invested a total of ₹12.3 lakh in different stages and exhausted his savings, Shristi Yadav went incommunicado. Realizing he was cheated, Pawan rushed to the police station and filed a complaint seeking help to get back his money. The police are trying to track down the trail of money and working out how to block the fund transfer at different stages.

Second case

Within an hour and half of this, Pooja Shetty, a 29-year-old private firm employee, walked into the station with similar complaint seeking help to get back ₹3 lakh which she was asked to transfer to the conman's account. She said she had been cheated by cyber frauds promising a part-time job and lured her to invest ₹3 lakh for a quick return after completion of tasks. The accused went incommunicado as soon as she transferred the funds.

Two more complaints

On the same day, two more similar cases were reported.

Anil Kumar, a private firm employee also filed a complaint with Central Cyber Crime Police on Friday that he wad lured with a part-time online job offer and the accused and made away with ₹73,000.

Aniket Das, 29, from Nagawara, complained to the East Division Cyber Crime Police on Friday that he lost ₹90,860 to a conman who lured him with a part-time job offer of liking and subscribing to YouTube videos. The accused asked him to make initial deposits for quick returns and vanished soon after he deposited the amount.

Book release today

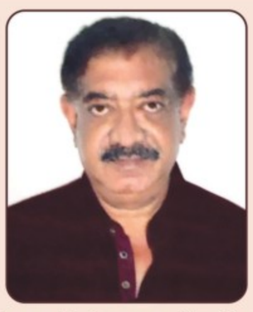
The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

'R-3 R.R. Rao, Resplendent Resonating Reflections' published by Destination Heritage and written by Dr. Gita U.B. will be released by former Ambassador Gurjit Singh on Sunday. The programme will be held at the Indian Institute of World Culture, No. 6, B.P. Wadia Road, Basavanagudi, from 11 a.m. onwards.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

SMT. VASANTHA Raman w/o Sri P. S. Raman Dy. CDA (Retd.) of Mudikondan, mother to Swaminathan (Kamesh) and Annapoorani (Sudha) passed away on 11/04/2023. Dasasthu on 20/04/23 M:9884725796, 9841594521 044-22291397



Joseph George Kurien
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It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Mr. Joseph Kurien, Age 64, on 14th April 2023.

He was adored and loved dearly by his family, wife and children.

For details, please contact 093810 25572 or 098407 77791 099400 45572

DEATH

GIRIJA MAHADEVAN
W/o. **Late V Mahadevan,**
Retd. United India Insurance
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BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

95th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

D. SAROJA
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Fondly remembered by :
Smt.Vijaya & Sri.N.S. Mohanram
Smt.Vatsala & Sri.V A Raghu
Sri.T.K. Balaji & Smt.Sheela Balaji
Smt.Mala & Sri.S. Ramakrishnan
Grand Children & Great Grand Children

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

TWENTY SECOND ANNIVERSARY
ON 16-04-2023

Sri S.Janardhan
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Partners and Staff of
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DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

Man kills girlfriend then turns himself in

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The staff of Rajagopal Nagar police station were in for a surprise when a man walked in and confessed that he had killed his girlfriend three days over a trivial row at his house.

The police took him into custody and later escorted him to the rented house in Laggere to find Navya, 24, lying dead in a pool of blood with her throat slit.

The deceased Navya was a clerk with the Internal Security Division and was living with her mother in Koramangala. She was in a relationship with Prashanth, an operator at a factory in Peenya, for the last six years. The duo were distant relatives and from the same town.

Prashanth told the police that he suspected Navya's fidelity as she spent a lot of time chatting with others. He had objected to this often. Prashanth deliberately avoided her birthday on Tuesday and invited her home on Friday to celebrate it. Navya came and cut the cake, and told him that she had to return soon. The two then argued about Navya chatting with others and the accused's fear that she would ditch him.

In the fight, Prashanth got a kitchen knife and slashed her neck, killing her on the spot. While Navya profusely bled and died, Prashanth sat with the body for few hours before walking into the station to surrender. The police have recovered the knife and booked him for murder.

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Electrical South Zone, 9th Main, 9th Cros,, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru - 560 011

No.EE/ELE/S/TEND/01/2023-24 Date:15.04.2023

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)
(Through e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Electrical South Zone, invites tenders from eligible Tenderers for supply of the items listed below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value of work (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (in Rs.)
1	Providing Networking, CCTV Camera's Computers, Printers, Xerox Machine, TV's, UPS and Fire Extinguishers to Counting Centre at SSMRV College, Jayanagar4th Block, in view of 2023 Karnataka Assembly Election.	12.00	30,000/-
2	Providing Temporary Lighting, DG Set, Public Address System, Wiring and Panel Board with connected accessaries to Counting Centre at SSMRV College, Jayanagar4th Block, in view of 2023 Karnataka Assembly Election.	12.00	30,000/-

1) Tender documents may be downloaded from **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** **2)** Pre-bid Meeting : **20.04.2023 at 3.00 p.m. 3)** Last date for submission of tenders: **24.04.2023 upto 4.00 p.m. 4)** Opening of Technical bids: **25.04.2023 at 4.30 p.m.** Further details can be accessed from GoK e-procurement website **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the office of the undersigned.

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PERSONAL

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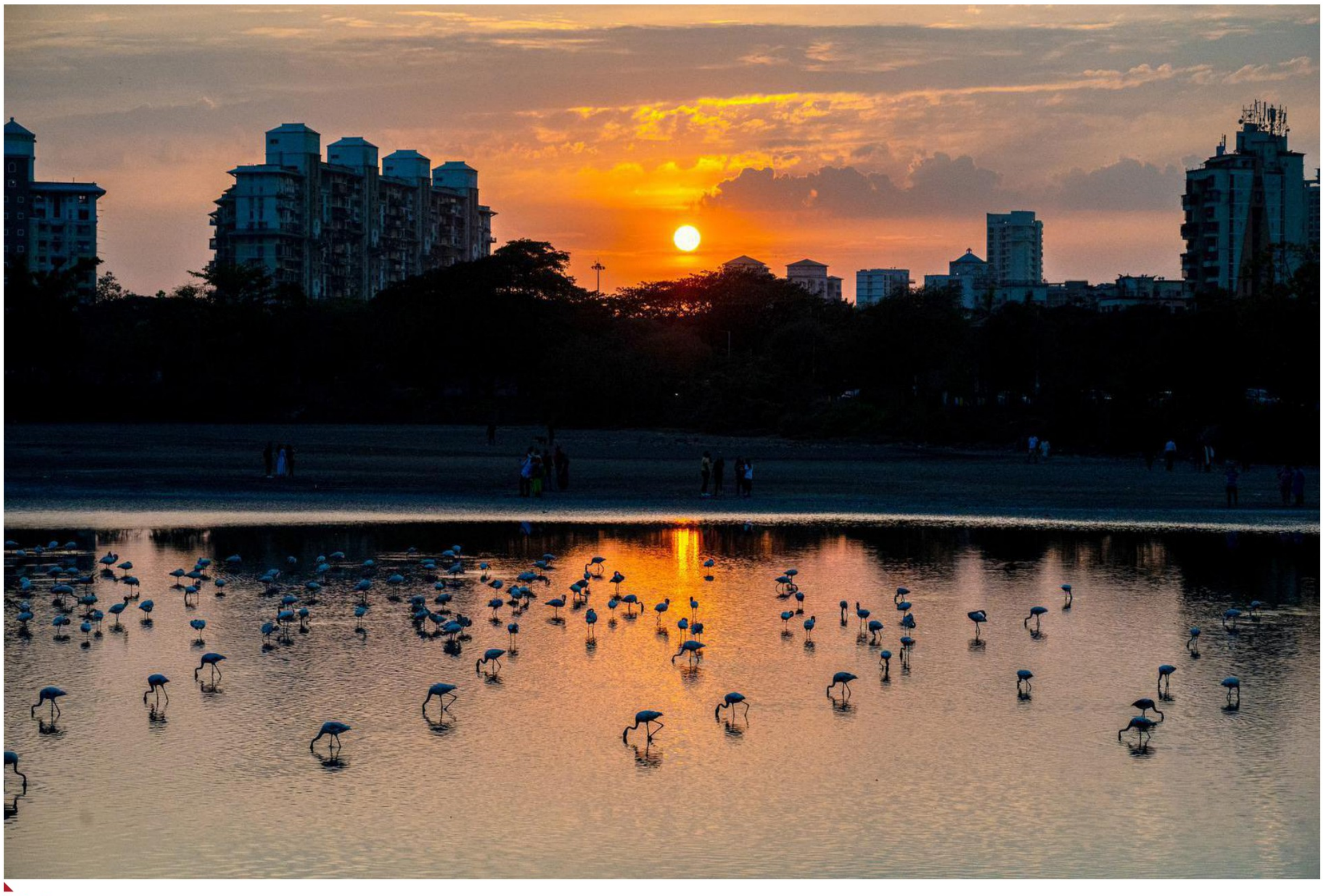
Birds of a feather: A pair of greater flamingos relaxing in Navi Mumbai during high tide. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Ornithologist's delight: The flamingos in the sanctuary at Navi Mumbai are an attraction for tourists and birders. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Filter feeders: Flamingos use their beaks to strain out algae and small crustaceans from water. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Priceless experience: Morning walkers in Navi Mumbai can enjoy the company of flamingos. RITU RAJ KONWAR



Iconic stance: One theory put forward by scientists for the flamingos' famous pose is that they tend to pull one leg up close to the body to conserve heat that might otherwise be lost while standing in water. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Probe finds no manipulation, but says illegally collected voter data was stored in foreign server

The investigation found involvement of some BBMP officials in the offence of enabling the trust to illegally collect voter data

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

The investigation into the alleged voter data theft by Chilume Educational Cultural and Rural Development Trust has ruled out any electoral fraud or manipulation of electoral roll in the three constituencies – Shivajinagar, Chickpet and Mahadevapura – where the data was collected.

However, in his final report submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) for Karnataka Manoj Kumar Meena, Bengaluru, Regional Commissioner Amlan Adithya Biswas found the involvement of some BBMP officials in the offence of enabling the Trust to illegally collect voter data on an unauthorised private digital application - Digital Sameeksha - and storage of the same in a foreign server.

As directed by the ECI, a comprehensive verification of the purity of the electoral rolls was taken up in Mahadevapura, Shivajinagar and Chickpet. No electoral fraud or manipulation of electoral roll is detected in the three constituencies. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Highlights of the report

- No electoral fraud or manipulation of electoral roll has been found in the three constituencies – Shivajinagar, Chickpet and Mahadevapura
- Involvement of BBMP officials found in enabling Chilume to illegally collect voter data
- Data has been collected on an unauthorised private digital application and has been stored in a foreign server
- Data stored in a foreign server must be recovered immediately and a separate criminal case should be filed
- Election machinery of BBMP needs to be drastically revamped and oriented

No evidence of tampering

"There is no evidence of any intrusion into or tampering of data on ERO.net or the operation of the Garuda app. Verifications and allegations regarding the activities of Chilume Trust are found to be partially correct," says the 49-page report.

Following complaints by Samanwaya Trust and the KPCC to the CEO last year and based on media reports, the Election Commission ordered an enquiry into the allegations by the Regional Commissioner in November 2022.

As directed by the ECI, a comprehensive verification of the purity of the electoral rolls was taken up in Mahadevapura, Shivajinagar and Chickpet. No electoral fraud or manipulation of electoral roll is detected in the three constituencies.

In Chickpet, out of 16,306 deletions after a complete door-to-door check using authorised Booth Level Officers (BLOs), the Roll Observer (RO) found only 3.64% improper deletions, which have since been corrected, and 0% improper additions out of 4,343 additions.

In Shivajinagar, the RO reported that there are only 0.98% incorrect additions out of the 5,219 cases and 3.3% incorrect deletions out of the 14,727 deletions. Appropriate corrective measures have been taken. With respect to Mahadevapura, the RO has reported 0.43% incorrect additions out of the 25,535 additions and 3% incorrect deletions out of 32,529 deletions, says the report.

Modus operandi

The available evidence indicates that the voter data collected by Chilume Educational Cultural and Rural Development Trust has been stored in a foreign server, thereby willfully creating opportunities for wrongful gain from personal data, the report said, recommending a separate investigation by the police into the matter.

"The data stored on a foreign server must be recovered immediately and a separate criminal case should be filed for this," states the report.

Recommending the need for putting in place a detailed procedure with clear guidelines with respect to using NGOs in SVEEP activities, the report says that in the guise of free service certain NGOs may just be getting a foothold into the activities which are sensitive in nature. The election machinery of BBMP needs to be drastically revamped and oriented, the report says..

"From the information available, the activities of Chilume in BBMP with respect to SVEEP and election work go back to 2017. Their modus operandi is to give a voluntary letter to the authorities, often innocuously worded in general terms about their commitments and activities and obtain some kind of forwarding letter, which is then presented to lower level authorities as an endorsement to obtain documentary permissions. Their main objective in the guise of voter awareness, appears to be data collection from voters and creation of voter databases and to commercially utilise this data possibly for election candidates," according to the report.

"They pose as surveyors and seek entry by offering their services for elections pro bono but compensate for this by obtaining various other paid projects and activities, some involving core election activities like summary revision. They seem to be able to influence and mould the decisions of officials at various levels to achieve these objectives. This has happened so much so that some of the glaring inconsistencies in their proposals are ignored or not diligently examined when contracting them," the report says.

'New govt. should not go back on job regularisation promise'

Still waiting: There are 16,000 pourakarmikas in Bengaluru, out of which 8,000 are drivers and helpers, whose jobs have still not been regularised. FILE PHOTO

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

Last month, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai announced the regularisation of the jobs of over 11,000 pourakarmikas who come under Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). However, on ground, several pourkarmikas have not received their permanent status. This election season, their biggest worry is that when a new government comes to the helm, the order might be reversed or not effectively implemented.

Demands of pourakarmikas

Number of pourakarmikas in the city:
Around 16,000

The State government has announced regularisation of their jobs in two phases:
3,600 **and** 11,000

Primary requests

- Job regularisation of all workers
- Higher salaries
- Better facilities and all-round access to Suvidha cabins
- Housing facilities

Promises not kept

"First, they (government) said that they would regularise 3,000 and odd jobs, then they said 11,000, but I feel like they never speak the truth. Many of us have not been regularised yet. This government's term will be over soon and when the new government comes, they may claim that they cannot implement everything the old government had sanctioned. We have seen this happen for so many years," said Manimeghalai, a pourakarmika from Koramangala, who has been working since 1995.

Karnataka Votes 2023

Many pourkarmikas shared the same opinion. "These leaders come during elections and campaign pompously. If we take the money they give us and vote for them, it is in no way helpful to us in the long run. I am a physically-challenged single mother and no matter who I vote for, it will not help with my children's education in any way," said Kamalamma, another pourakarmika from Banaswadi.

There are not many new demands from pourakarmikas, except they want the assurances previously given to them to be fulfilled. "We want better salaries; we want proper facilities in the suvidha cabins. A place to have our food and drink some water is the most basic facility they can provide us with. They should also fix proper shift timings for us," they demanded.

Significant in numbers

There are 16,000 pourakarmikas in Bengaluru out of which 8,000 are drivers and helpers, whose jobs have still not been regularised. "This will continue to be our major demand even if there is a new government. We want the jobs of all pourkarmikas, including drivers and helpers to be made permanent like the Chief Minister had assured," said Maitreyi Krishnan of the BBMP Pourkarmikara Sangha.

(This is the fifth part of a series on what people want – people from sectors whose voices are often unheard, and who are not on the top of priorities in votebank politics.)

Spectre of rebellion in Chickpet for Congress

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Former Mayor and Congress ticket aspirant from Chickpet constituency Gangambike Mallikarjun, who had recently filed her nomination as an independent candidate and from Indian National Congress, has failed to make the cut in the third list of candidates released by Congress on Saturday. The party has fielded former MLA R. V. Devaraj from the constituency. This has raised the spectre of dissidence and rebel candidate against Congress in the constituency.

Ms. Mallikarjun, a close associate and follower of senior Congress leader Ramalinga Reddy, had filed two sets of nominations, one as an INC candidate and the other as an Independent on Thursday. She had taken out a procession of thousands of party workers and filed her nominations along with another aspirant KGF Babu, who made his wife Shaziya Tarannum file a nomination as an independent.

With gusto

Cricket fans cheering during the TATA IPL 2023 match between Royal Challengers and Delhi Capitols at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Construction activities taken up at Kuppalli facing resistance

Sathish G. T.
HASSAN

Construction activities taken up by the Rashtrakavi Kuvempu Trust at Kuppalli in Tirthahalli taluk of Shivamogga – the birth place of Rashtrakavi Kuvempu – have faced resistance by environmentalists and admirers of the late poet.

A file photo of Kavi Mane, Kuvempu's home in Kuppalli.

The Trust, set up by the State government, looks after the Kuvempu memorial Kavishaila, Kavimane, Tejaswi memorial and a museum at Kuppalli. Recently, it began constructing a building for a canteen and toilets near the Poornachandra Tejaswi memorial to facilitate visitors. Several trees were cut down to make way for the structure. This has displeased environmentalists and admirers of Kuvempu, who argue that the building undermines the purpose for which the Trust was formed. The construction should not have taken place in the Kuvempu Memorial Bio-Park area, they say.

A few readers of Kuvempu have written to the Trust raising objections to the construction. "Both Kuvempu and his son Tejaswi opposed disturbing the greenery in Kuppali. They were against constructing buildings. However, the Trust has ignored its basic objectives by taking up construction activities," said Narasimhamurthy Halehatti, an assistant professor of Kannada at a college in Bengaluru and one of the signatories of the letter.

When *The Hindu* contacted Kadidal Prakash, secretary of the trust, he said the trust had taken up construction of a canteen and a few toilets considering the crowd visiting the place in recent years.

Following opposition to concrete structures on the premises, the trust constituted a committee for suitable suggestions. The committee included K. Chidananda Gowda, former VC of Kuvempu University and son-in-law of Kuvempu, M.C. Narendra of Bengaluru, who was one of those who had raised this issue, B.P. Veerabhadrappa, Vice-Chancellor of Kuvempu University, and a Superintendent Engineer of the Public Works Department.

"The committee suggested dropping the construction of canteen and stressed the need for toilets. We have decided to follow the committee's recommendation. The construction of toilets is going on," said Mr. Kadidal Prakash.

The State government had announced ₹1 crore for the trust. Of that, ₹50 lakh had been released.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, APR. 16	
RISE	06:07 SET 18:32
RISE	03:13 SET 15:09
MONDAY, APR. 17	
RISE	06:06 SET 18:32
RISE	03:58 SET 16:05
TUESDAY, APR. 18	
RISE	06:06 SET 18:32
RISE	04:40 SET 17:00

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	25
Mysuru	36	24
Bengaluru	36	22

Bengaluru Today
36°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist & haze. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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THE HINDU

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

COSMOPOLITAN

URDU SYED MUSLIM 23/158cm, B.Tech BioMed, deen and beautiful girl, Upper middle class family seeks Tamilnadu based Deen Groom working in European countries. Contact: +919443695850, +919629216106

GOOD LOOKING, Telugu, Devanga 25yrs/162cms, M.Tech(Biotech), employed in MNC, Hyderabad, seeks suitable groom below 30years. CNB. Whatsapp: 9160697799

GROOM WANTED
Christian Girl 39 years with Master Degree in Medical Looking for Christian Groom age 39 to 42 in Engineering or Hotel Management. Preferable Abroad country alliance. Full Family Settlement Expenses Ours
Cell: 75500 86681

KERALA HINDU Girl, Divorcee, 34 Yr, 165cm, Fair, PhD, Asst. Professor, Delhi University. Seeking Er. Dr. Professionals working in Delhi/NCR/Abroad. CNB. Ct: 9447400724 / 7994313295.

DOCTOR

ALLIANCE INVITED for lady doctor 2nd year pg pulmonary medicine 164 cms, fair, good looking RC Nadar, settled at Chennai from Doctors PG or above, businessman, senior executives India abroad. Contact 6381146496 or fbb.grge@gmail.com

DOCTOR GIRL MD Anesthesiology 33/165 fair pretty cultured & well mannered Chennai based doctors family. Father Doctor Kerala Nair, Mother Tamil CSI. Doctor grooms MD MS MCh DM & Engineers from good family background prfd. 9840050381/ 9840985383

MCH– ONCO II yr 28/5ft 8inch seeks PG/SS veg groom from Chennai. Parents: Brahmin & Pillai. M–6383189302

ENGINEER

GROOM REQUIRED for a 28 old girl, MTech from IIT Chennai ,working as scientist in Chennai ,from Kerala belongs to SC, Vishakam ,parents doctors. Whatsapp to 9447763685

KANNADA

KANNADA DEVANGAR parents seek groom for divorcee girl 35 yrs TN Govt. Service. Other Suitable caste considered. Ph: 7356896214, 9446591614

MBA / CA / ICWA

SM4 SINGHAL Girl 5'4"/June 1992, B.Tech MBA(XLRI) 24 LPA, Pref MBA Qual. boy in NCR M:7533807993, nitink_singhal@yahoo.co.in

TAMIL

WANTED SUITABLE and Equally Qualified Protestant Christian Nadar, Good Looking Groom, Employed in Australia Preferably in Sydney. Below 35yrs 168cm to 180cm for a Protestant Nadar Girl 160cm, Wheatish, 30yrs, MS in Bio Medical Engineering, Presently an AU Permanent Resident living and working for a Global Medical Technology Company, Sydney, Australia. 80,000 AUD–PA. Ct: 7200045725

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Girl Fair, Good Looking, 03–04–1986 born / 152cm / M.Sc M.Phil, working as Assistant Professor in a Reputed Women's College, Mount Road, Chennai. Both Parents Doctors (Private), Suitable Alliance, Employed / Settled in Chennai / With Clean Habits from Same Community. Contact: 9841182514

DKV MAY 94'/167 Fair BE. TCS Chennai, Parents Hindu / CSI. Seeks Groom Dr /Er. Govt Employee. 8056143638

TAMIL

CSI/CHRISTIAN 37yrs/165cms B.Tech (I.T), M.B.A, Eng CTS, Now at UK (Work Permit) seeks B.E & B.Tech MBBS and abroad Bride groom Ct: 9791322874, 8870560816.

TAMIL MUSLIM BE MBA 28/157 Fair Working in MNC Seeks Well Settled Bridegroom. Contact : 98424 13663

ADIDRIVADIAR SC RC Christian 34/165 MCA Salary 50K PM Seeks Suitable Groom, Ct: 94455 07220

GOD FEARING well to do Groom age 33 to 35 for a God fearing, fair, beautiful, very rich Nadar Christian girl MBA (UK), employed in a Foreign Embassy in Chennai. Parents Contact. 95000 27027

DOCTOR, Mudaliar, MS, 27/168,Fair& Slim Educated&Cultured,Upper Middle class family,Coimbatore seeks groom MD/MS/DNB/MCh/DM.Ct:9994498762

MUDALIAR (CNB) : 24/V.Fair & Beautiful, B.E, Textile Manufacturing & Export Business, Affluent Family, Seeks Groom Business / Abroad / India – 8939012419

MUDALIYAR SUPER Splty Dr. (M.Ch) 29/155 seeks groom with PG Super Splty Dr. with MCh/DM/MS/MD. Ct: 9500085455/ 9341274028

VANNIYAKULA KSHATRIYA, fair girl, 25yrs/168cm Uthiram– 1 patham, B.E ,M.S(Engg) Australia. Father S.E, (Retd) TNEB. Seek Smart handsome Groom M.S(Engg). Ct: 9789461060

WORKING PROFESSIONAL, Tuluva Vellal Mudaliar Good looking Girl 35 Uthirattathy, Meenam, Family Seeks Alliance from First and Unmarried Bachelor Bridegroom Aged 35–37 Yrs, Employed, Caste no bar. Contact: After 7 PM; 7550245659

BE /WORKING in MNC. Father Business Man, Settled Family Seeks Alliance for their Daughter. 26/Kettai, Pillai/Mudaliar or Any Caste. Call : 98400 93322

POST GRADUATE Doctor MD Anaesthesia 28 SC Govt Service seeks suitable PG Doctor groom. Ct: 7401660086

SC ADIDRAVIDAR 24/B.Com., MBA., Govt Job (Assistant Manager) Canara Bank 33000Pm Seeks Groom. 9514173518

VISWAKARMA MIRU–4,29 BTec NITT non IT Mgr 11Lpa slim beautiful Chennai.High profile invited. 9443945147

PILLAI/MUDALIAR, 33, Good looking, MBBS, MD Final yr, Well Settled family seeks Groom aged 33-36 yrs, Engineer / Business / Doctor. 9345855735

TAMIL HINDU Girl, 35, BE and MBA from leading B–School, NRI working in London in MNC, iyer family, earlier wedding nullified, alliance invited from well qualified, well employed groom from good urban family background with modern outlook, upto 40 years, marital status Any (single/divorced/widowed), caste no bar. Contact 9381856277

DKV 31/164 fair B.Tech (NIT) MBA (IIT), MNC Chennai seeks bridegroom from educated family. Ct: 9940507235

VELLALA PILLAI, Girl Age 29 (Hastham), MBBS doing PG invites proposals from Doctors belonging to Vellala or other communities of similar status. Contact No: 9446284366. Email:kn_pillai@yahoo.com

AGAMUDI MUDALIAR EliteFamily 31/165 Mirugsiam. Raghu in Lagnm PG (HR MNC) Seeks IIM/M.Tech Grom 9176780777

MUDALIAR (CNB): 25/V.Fair, B. Arch,Having own Multi Cuisine Restaurant, Commercial Complex, Construction Business, Elite Family, Chennai – Seeks Groom Business / Doctor / Abroad – 7358510790

YADAVA GIRL age 25 BE Working in Software co 9L. P/A seeking yadava groom CT 9381382000

HINDU NADAR 27, BE, 165cm, Working in Bosch, Income 130000 Seeks Suitable Groom KA Raman Nadar 9380791999

TAMIL

KULALA (TELUGU), 26/160, Uthiradam, 2nd marriage, issueless, short lived. Seeks suitable groom from educated family, working professional not more than 34, Contact: 8075760926

VANIYA CHETTIAR, M.Sc, 43/157, Karthigai, Govt. Scntf. Officer seeks equally Qualified Employed Groom. Contact: 94452 07116

MUDALIAR 23/160, Beautiful, B.E,MBA, SWE,Wipro, 500000.PA,Well Settled Family,CNB. 7299576644, 7299576666

VANIYA CHETTIAR Poorattathi 27/165, Fair, MBBS, Govt. Doctor, Pondicherry, Seeks Doctor groom, Sub Caste No Bar. Cont: 9442066913

HINDU PARAYAR,25/155, M.Sc., Bio Tech, seeks well educated groom from same Community with clean habits. Preferably from Dindigul & Coimbatore. Ct. 8680959516, 9789611291.

VELLA PILLAI 25 ME (CSE) MNC Chennai, 168 cm Kadagam Poosam seeks suitable Groom. Contact: 8778043772, 9444562345. Email: kannansd@gmail.com

ARUNTHATHIYAR 26/152, BE, Chennai, Star Magam,Seeks Groom Govt Employee, Swe,Banks 9487303638/ 9443521217

AD 27/160 BHMS Dr.wrking seeks Groom blw 32yrs well settled Edu Hindu fmly Dr/Er/any Govt officr 9444220872

Christian & Hindu Nadar, 26/166, BE V.Fair, V.VIP, Seeks Equal Status Merchant Boys.7299525999 / 7550113468

DKV, 28/160, Revathi, B.Tech(NIT), Masters (USA) seeks well-educated, NRI groom from same community with clean habits. Preferably from USA/Canada. Contact: 94869 67791, 94430 27791.

Naidu, 50yrs, +2 Completed, Widow, Seeks Suitable Groom. Good Family Age, Caste No Bar. Ct: 70925 69171.

✔ **Tamil Hindu** Adi Dravida Only daughter. 26/162cm/BA Economics from USA. Currently preparing for UPSC Civil services. Father retired Army Officer, Mother working in PSU at Delhi. Seek suitable alliance. email: bvr310524@gmail.com

HINDU SC Adi-Dravida 27/156 cm B.E MNC 16L PA seeks suitable Allaiance from Govt/ PSU/ IT. Ct: 94441 55781

HINDU SC/AD, 35yrs, 157cm, Sr. Software Engineer. TCS. Seeks Educated well setttled Groom. Ct: 99521 47216.

TELUGU

BORN AUGUST 1990 165cm Ph.D Scholar smart medium complexion from a Reputed family seeks well educated and settled groom in India born not earlier than 1987. Call : 9790908109

CHENNAI BASED Professionally qualified girl 32,well settled, Seeking Groom(Age 32 to 35 yrs) with Clean Habits,well qualified having professional degree(BE/BTech) from cultured family Preferably (Tamil/Telugu Naidu) Contact: 9941348103

BALIJA/ GAVARA Sadhayam Kumbha, 31/5'5, B.E, Fair Good looking Girl for remarriage (Short lived) seeks suitable Groom India/Abroad Caste No Bar. Contact:8056093838/ 9500009694

GROOM REQUIRED for Balija Naidu /Kapu/Telaga 26y, H.160 fair, MBBS, Working Doctor from Hyderabad Seeking Doctor/ Engineer (Local/Abroad). Contact: 0973-36053453 & 9849951874.

NAIDU ISSULESS DIVORCE 1975,Working as Ofcr in TN PSU. Seeks Groom Preferably Chennai, CNB– 8778873501

KAMMA 41 Divorced Ph.D Visakam, Thulam seeks educated groom 7904501004 / 9942363464, vnimavathi@gmail.com

HINDU, SPECIALIST Doctor MBBS, MS. Reddy 32 Y/165cm Fair, slim. From Affluent family settled in Chennai. Seeks well educated Groom from Similar Background. Professional/ Business/ Entrepreneur. CNB. 89256 40111

✔ **TELUGU BRAHMIN** Girl 1984/BTech/ Employed. Need professional, unmarried, any Brahmin Boy in India or USA. Ph: 9791111321/9445623800.

TAMIL

GROOM WANTED
Looking for Vanniyar Boy
(Divorcee / Widower with or without Child)
aged between 33 - 38 years.
Doctor / Engineer / Govt. Officials for Hindu Tamil Vanniyar 31 years Post Graduate Doctor (Divorcee) with female child, only daughter of Doctor Parents. Parents of suitable person can send the Horoscope with personal details.
Contact : **89397 15299**

wanted elite groom
Hindu Naidu Girl,
25yrs, 160cm, Slim, Fair,
M.E, doing MBA in Chennai
Looking from Affluent Family
Preferably in India,
with good values.
Ct: **93667 50524**

BRIDES WANTED

COMPUTER / INFO.TECH

NEED BRIDE for Software Engineer, aged 41 yrs, divorced with no children, reside in Bangalore, height 5ft 10inch, BE.Comp.Sc graduate. Bride should be Software Engineer, (caste no bar), 25–35 yrs, unmarried/divorced (without kids). Contact 9686277998

DIVORCEE

BRAHMIN IYER in Mumbai, 38yrs old divorcee, IIT IIM seeks Brahmin South Indian bride without issues. Contact: 98408 53946 / 91761 45760.

TAMILNADU BASED second divorce, groom 1964 born. Curious for an issueless bride, who should be focused and escalate and persist. Ct: 63857 54610.

ENGINEER

Brmn / Veg Graduate Bride for 91 Bom BE MNC. 9740444327

HINDI

1985/175CM. IT. 40 Lakhs PA. Chennai. Father Doctor. Seeks well educated bride. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN 41/170 B.E Software Engineer , Chennai, Never married, seeks bride from elite family, Caste no bar, CT–9500188067

✔ **PILLAI(KARUNEEGAR),** DOB:24–01–92, BE, Veg, Job: MNC (Software) Chennai, Annual Income: 23.5 lakhs. Seeking a suitable bride from the same or any other community. Ph: 9841784047 Email: pingme.arul@gmail.com.

61 YRS, without income seeks settled widow, physically challenged as life companion from TN/ Kerala/Karnataka only. Age & Caste No Bar. Whatsapp: 98651 90772 (Madurai)

VISHWAKARMA 40, Divorced, Slightly disabled (Foot drop) DCE Manager P Ltd, 40k. caste no bar. Seeking understanding life partner. 8015624255

HINDU 31 Years 185 cm. Currently working in Germany as a Senior Logistics Program Manager after doing MS in US. Well Settled Family. Star Hastham and BC. Seeks well Educated, Bride (Caste No Bar) from abroad or willing to move abroad for their only Son. 9840041041

TAMIL

DKV 33/173 Hastham Manager Govt. Bank seeks suitable bride from educated family. Caste No bar. 9940507235

VISWAKARMA TAMIL Veg 36/178 BE (Mech) Hastham Fair 50k pm Seeks suitable bride CNB only Veg Ct:9884352960

HINDU DKV Pallan ME, 41/167, Manager, National Bank 1.2 lac pm. Seeks Bank, Govt, Teaching Staff. CELL: 99652 11259

NEED ALLIANCE for a Lawyer 29/6ft. LLM Vadama Affluent family Kerala origin Son of former high court judge practicing in SC Girl should be educated, cultured and supportive.Contact 9846173871 Emailid–– rchitam66@gmail.com

VEGETARIAN TAMIL/ Telugu/ Kannada/ Hindi Brahmin/ Non–Brahmin for a Brahmin Boy April 1987 born. M.Tech. Software Engineer at MNC, Bangalore, Rs. 2,00,000 P.M. Handsome. 170 cms; 65 kg. Parents Chennai–based. Ct: WhatsApp 9940079589.

VAANIYAR CHETTY– age 37 visagam / 176 / MS (Sweden) working Sweden 60L PA, (Swedish Citizen & OCI) Seeks (BE / MS / MBA / MCA / CA / Ph.D) Prof. Bride CNB. Ct:9840429799

TAMIL

SMART WELL settled Nadar groom working in IT company, age 30 years height:173 cm complexion: wheatish brown education Qualification: B.E, Income: 12 lakhs/PA seeking for a suitable bride who is educated and career oriented (caste no bar) horoscope optional according to the bride's side, Contacting person: groom's mother. Cell : 9944491730, 9159036165. Mail: rajashanthi15@gmail.com.

A WELL settled Healthy Hindu 57, Separated Seeks Elite Independent Lady as life partner & Soulmate Caste Nobar 7397087032 mducbe18@gmail.com

HINDU MUDALIYAR 25 BE 178cm Working in Netherland Inc–10Lacs well settled Rich 9710093999 / 8939691888

BRIDE WANTED for an Army Officer, Saiva Pillai, Age 32 years. Rasi: Kadakam. Star: Ayilyam. Contact No: 82487 00585

DIVORCEE, 38 yrs, Govt Doctor, Hindu Nadar, Education & Economical status no bar, seeking suitable bride, Contact: 9750605329, 9659064307.

HINDU CHETTIAR, Age 34,BBA LLB own business well settled family seeks suitable bride, caste no bar ct 9884933124

MUDALIAR 28/172, Handsome, BE,SWE,Wipro,Chennai,900000.PA, Well Settled Family,CNB. 7299576644, 7299576666

DEVANGA 38 B.Arch Self Employed 50000PM CNB Seeks Brides Educated with Job Orphans, Widow, Divorce Without Issue 9962135928 / 9940158383

HINDU NADAR, Sivakasi, Thiruvonam, B.E, 33, Freelance Chess Player & Coach, Doctor Parents, Seeks Suitable Bride. Ct. WhatsApp 9842989884

VELLA PILLAI 31 BE (CS) MNC Chennai 165 cm Kadagam Poosam seeks suitable Bride. Ct: 8870262286, 9894624392 Email: muthuchezhianrmc@gmail.com

HINDU DEVENDIRA kula vellalar M.E. 28/168 Asst. Engg. in PWD seeks suitable bride 8248195168, 8667380725

MUDALIAR 29, BE, MS 180cm, Smart, Working in USA well settled Seeks Bride CNB Ct.8778514465 / 7200866346

MUDALIYAR BE, Chennai 1985 Fair Well Settled,1st Marriage,Bride wanted Emp/Unemploy.9952010118,8610518808

SC AD 29/ B.E., [EEE] Govt.Job, Officer {B.S.N.L.} 70,000p.m. Govt. Or Pvt. Seeks Bride. Ph:7397674481

VANNIYAR 33,167 Pooradam Fair BE, MS, Working in Sharjah Co–op Society. Seeks Educated Bride Below 29 Ct:9444154329 arivarsini_2006@yahoo.com

HINDU MUDALIYAR BE, 27, 175cm Income 200000 Seeks Suitable Bride 9710093999 / 8939691888

WIDOWER 69 Hindu Tamil Business Good Health Needs Like Minded Soul Partner 50-60 with Good Health to lead Family 8608813794.

33, AYILYAM, ICWAI,MBA (IIM), Manager, SC, Hindu, Seeks Ragu Kethu Bride, caste no bar Chennai 9677266232

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TAMIL

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INBRIEF

200 file nomination papers on second day

As many as 200 candidates, including Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and several senior MLAs, filed their nomination papers on the second day on Saturday. The 200 nominations included 16 filed by women candidates for the May 10 Assembly polls.

According to the Election Commission, 26 Bharatiya Janata Party candidates, five of the Congress, 20 of the Janata Dal (Secular), 22 of the Aam Aadmi Party, and two from the CPI(M) filed the papers.

There were 84 nominations by unrecognised parties and 41 by Independents.

According to the EC schedule of events, the last date for filing nominations is April 20. The papers will be scrutinised on April 21 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is April 24.

Stage set for Rahul Gandhi's rally in Kolar today

After several delays, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will address a party rally on Sunday in Kolar. It will be in the same place where he made a remark on the Modi surname for which he has been convicted of criminal defamation, resulting in him being stripped of the membership of the Lok Sabha.

Mr. Gandhi will address the 'Jai Bharat' rally and inaugurate the newly constructed Indira Gandhi Bhavan, an office and auditorium with a seating capacity of 750 people, near the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) office in Bengaluru. The venue in Kolar *(in picture)* was inspected on Saturday by Congress leaders, including KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar.

Several senior Congress leaders, including AICC president M. Mallikarjun Kharge, general secretary in charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala, Mr. Shivakumar, and the former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah are expected to participate in the events.

Savadi fielded from Athani; Siddaramaiah won't contest from Kolar

Congress announces third list of 43 candidates; the former Union Minister Margaret Alva's son Nivedit Alva and the former Minister Motamma's daughter Nayana Jyothi Jhawar bag ticket

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

A day after Laxman Savadi severed his ties with the BJP and joined the Congress, the party on Saturday announced his candidature from Athani constituency in Belagavi district.

In a significant move, the party put to rest speculation over the candidate in Kolar. The party fielded Kothur G. Manjunath from Kolar and not the former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who will now be confined to Varuna. It was speculated that he would contest from Kolar too as a second seat.

Laxman Savadi

16 new faces

The Congress on Saturday announced its third list of 43 candidates. Now, the party has to release candidates for the remaining 15 constituencies. There are 16 new faces in the list and 38 in all the lists so far.

Mr. Savadi, a three-time MLA, was denied the ticket by the ruling BJP and then joined the Congress on Friday. He resigned from the membership of the Karnataka Legislative Council. He has to face Mahesh Kumathalli, then in the Congress, now the BJP nominee.

In Arsikere, K.M. Shivalinge Gowda, who quit the JD(S) and joined the Congress a few days ago, has been fielded to contest the poll. He was elected to the Assembly in 2018 on the JD (S) ticket.

Actor not in race

Well-known Kannada actor and former Minister Umashree has been denied the ticket from the Terdal constituency in Bagalkot district. Siddapppa Ramappa Konnur has been given the ticket. In the Shikaripur constituency of Shivamogga district, the Congress has fielded G.B. Malatesh. He would take on B.Y. Vijayendra, son of the former Chief Minister and Lingayat strongman B.S. Yediyurappa.

H.C. Yogesh is the party's nominee in Shivamogga constituency, while in Shivamogga Rural (SC), the party has fielded Sreenivas Kariyanna. Uday Shetty of the party will contest from Karkala constituency and he has to face Energy and Kannada and Culture Minister V. Sunil Kumar. In Kundgol of Dharwad district, the party has fielded incumbent MLA Kusumavathi C. Shivalli, despite resentment against her among a section of party workers.

In Hassan, the party has given the ticket to Banavasi Rangaswamy. He will take on Preetham J. Gowda of the BJP and H.P. Swaroop of the JD(S). The constituency is likely to witness a triangular contest.

In Bengaluru

In Saturday's list, the party named its candidates for four constituencies in Bengaluru – Dasarahalli (Dhanajaya Gangadharaiah), Chickpet (R.V. Devaraj), Bommanahalli (Umapathi Srinivas Gowda), and Bengaluru South (K.R. Ramesh).

In Puttur, Dakshina Kannada district, the party has denied the ticket to the former MLA Shakuntalal Shetty and fielded Ashok Kumar Rai. John Richard Lobo has been asked to contest from Mangaluru South. This apparently disappointed Ivan D'souza, who was aspiring for the ticket. M.K. Somashekara was given the ticket from Krishnaraja in Mysuru.

Suspense over four MLAs

The Hindu Bureau
Bengaluru

In the third list too, the Congress has not guaranteed the ticket to the four incumbent MLAs of the party. In Pulakeshinagar in Bengaluru, the party did not announce its nominee. MLA R. Akhanda Srinivas Murthy (Congress) won the seat in 2018. The names of three other MLAs S. Ramappa (Harihara), V. Muniyappa (Sidlaghatta), and D.S. Hoolageri (Lingsugur) were missing from the third list.

A son and a daughter

The Hindu Bureau
Bengaluru

The former Union Minister Margaret Alva's son Nivedit Alva has been given the ticket to contest from the Kumta constituency against BJP's Dinakar Shetty. Similarly, the former Minister Motamma's daughter Nayana Jyothi Jhawar has been given the ticket from Mudigere in Chikkamagaluru district.

Did Congress high command snub former CM?

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

Siddaramaiah

The Congress high command's decision to turn down the former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's request to allow him to contest the Legislative Assembly election from Kolar constituency, as a backup seat, seems to be a self-created embarrassment for the senior leader.

This comes a day before the former AICC president Rahul Gandhi's rally in Kolar on Sunday.

Public announcements

On many occasions, chief ministerial aspirant Mr. Siddaramaiah had publicly announced that he was seeking to contest from Kolar as the second constituency while the party had already fielded him from Varuna, earlier represented by his son. In Varuna, he is facing Housing Minister V. Somanna of the BJP.

At a huge rally in January 2023, the former Chief Minister had announced that he would contest from Kolar if the Congress high command allowed him to. He also promised to visit the constituency every week, if he got elected, and take up comprehensive development of Kolar district.

The party has decided to field Kothur G. Manjunath from Kolar. Mr. Manjunath was elected to the Assembly as an Independent from Mulbagal constituency in 2013 but was disqualified by the High Court of Karnataka on the charge of furnishing an illegal caste certificate.

Why Kolar

A couple of months ago, four-time MLA K. Srinivas Gowda, who was elected from Kolar in 2018, resigned from the JD(S) and joined the Congress. Apparently, he asked Mr. Siddaramaiah to contest from Kolar. The 75-year-old Congress leader, who won from Badami in 2018, was keen on Kolar on the ground that Badami was too far from Bengaluru. His contention was also that Kolar leaders had requested him to contest from the constituency since it would electorally benefit party candidates in neighbouring constituencies.

Mr. Siddaramaiah contested from two seats in 2018. He lost to G.T. Deve Gowda of the JD(S) in Chamundeshwari, but scraped through against B. Sriramulu (BJP) by a margin of about 1,700 votes.

Mr. Siddaramaiah, who contested 11 elections since his debut in 1983, has won eight Assembly polls.

Kin of Yediyurappa among candidates in JD(S) 3rd list

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Assurance to electorate: JD(S) national president H.D. Deve Gowda releasing 12 promises of the party to voters, in the presence of State unit president C.M. Ibrahim and the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, in Bengaluru on Saturday. PTI

A day after releasing its second list of 50 candidates, the Janata Dal (Secular) on Saturday released another list of six. Among those who got the party ticket were N.R. Santhosh, a relative of the former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, from Arsikere, the former BJP legislator Bharathi Shankar from Varuna, and the former Minister and BJP leader A.B. Maalakaraddy from Yadgir.

All the three were denied the ticket by the BJP. Mr. Santhosh, a close relative of Mr. Yediyurappa, was also the key figure in 'Operation Lotus' in 2019 where he figured prominently in shifting rebel legislators from the Congress and the JD(S) to a Mumbai hotel. He had been hopeful of the BJP ticket from Arsikeere, but was denied.

Changing candidate

While the party had earlier announced Banavara Ashok as its candidate, replacing incumbent legislator K.M. Shivalinge Gowda, now Mr. Ashok has been replaced by Mr. Santhosh. On Saturday, the former Prime Minister and party supremo H.D. Deve Gowda intervened in the matter, and brought about a compromise between Mr. Santhoh and Mr. Ashok at his residence, paving the way for the party to announce the name of the former.

Dr. Maalakaraddy had also been seeking the ticket for his daughter in the Congress this time even as he sought the BJP ticket. He has been named from Yadgir. Dr. Bharathi Shankar was elected as the BJP MLA in T. Narsipur (SC) constituency in 1999. He will take on the former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Congress candidate, and Housing Minister V. Somanna, the BJP nominee. Dr. Bharathi Shankar replaces Abhishek, who had been earlier named by the JD(S).

The others named include two-time Congress MLC Raghu Achar, who joined the JD(S) on Friday. He has been named for the Chitradurga seat. The former Congress leader Devaraj Patil has been named as the JD(S) candidate for Bagalkot.

Poll promises released

The former Prime Minister released the party's 12 poll promises on Friday at his residence in Padmanabhanagar here in the presence of JD(S) State president C.M. Ibrahim and former Chief Ministe H.D. Kumaraswmay .

The promises include Matrushree and women empowerment programmes, including waiver of loans of women self-help groups and five free cylinders a year, and enhancement of widow pension. It also announced Raitha Chaitanya, Vikalachetanara Asare, and an increase in the incentive for lawyers. It also made a slew of promises on education and health and for police personnel, religious minorities, the Scheduled Castes, and youth empowerment.

Mr. Gowda said the party would be releasing the manifesto later. "Mr. Kumaraswamy will be releasing the names for the rest of the constituencies in consultation with Mr. Ibrahim. There is no problem in identification of candidates."

Mr. Gowda also spoke about the reservation confusion in the State. He recalled that due to his work, the Valmikis were included in the ST list. Though Havanur commission identified rural Vokkaligas as most backward and gave 9% reservation, he said that he ensured the distribution of 4% quota to Muslims, 1% to most backward communities, and 4% to Vokkaligas. "I have been fair to all communities," he said.

High drama over denial of ticket ends with Shettar announcing his resignation from BJP

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

The day-long high drama over the denial of the BJP ticket to the former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar ended late on Saturday night with the leader announcing his decision to resign from the party's primary membership and MLA's position.

Last-minute efforts by the party's Karnataka election in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi failed to pacify Mr. Shettar. They left without speaking a word to pressperson who had been waiting for the outcome of the meeting.

This means the end of Mr. Shettar's more than three-decade-long association with the BJP. He said he would submit his resignation to Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri at Sirsi on Sunday morning.

Bid to placate him: Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, BJP's Karnataka in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan, and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai with the former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar at his residence in Hubballi on Saturday. KIRAN BAKALE

A visually pained Mr. Shettar said he failed to understand why was he being denied the party ticket. "All those who came to pacify me had no answers for my question on the denial of the ticket. Mr. Pradhan said they were willing to give the ticket to any of my family members and offer me a high position if I opted out. It is deeply painful to hear after having served the party for decades," he said. Declining to take anyone's name, he said those who were afraid of his possible claim for the Chief Minister's post in future were behind his ill-treatment, Mr. Shettar said.

To consult followers

"Pained by the ill-treatment, I had decided to contest the election at any cost and will consult my followers on whether to contest independently or align with any party," he announced.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Shettar postponed his decision twice – first, after Mr. Joshi met him as an emissary of the high command and again in the evening after he received information on Mr. Pradhan's intention to have a word with him.

Miffed over the delay in announcing the ticket to him for seeking re-election from Hubballi-Dharwad Central constituency, Mr. Jagadish Shettar had set Saturday morning as the deadline for taking a decision on his future course of action and had called a meeting of his followers and well-wishers to take their opinion.

This was after 16 councillors of the Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation (HDMC) and 49 State-level and local office-bearers of the party from Hubballi forwarded their resignation to the party's State president Nalin Kumar Kateel.

JD(S) to go with Left in 2024 polls

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) national president H.D. Deve Gowda announced that the party would stand with the Left parties during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

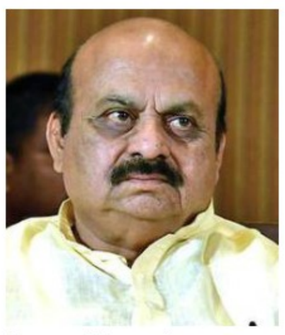
"We are sharing seats with the Left in Kerala, and we will go with them. Left leader Sitaram Yechury had called me on this issue," the former Prime Minister told media persons in response to a question on what would be the stand of the party for the Parliamentary polls.

Bommai and family are worth ₹52.12 cr.

Girish Pattanashetti
HUBBALLI

Chief Minister Basavaraj Somappa Bommai, a mechanical engineer by qualification, who filed his nomination papers from the Shiggaon Assembly constituency in Haveri district on Saturday, declared in the election affidavit that he and his family own assets worth ₹52.12 crore, which include property inherited from the Hindu Undivided Family (HUF).

Mr. Bommai owns moveable assets worth ₹5.98 crore, his wife, Channamma, owns moveable assets worth ₹1.14 crore and his dependent daughter Aditi Bommai owns moveable assets worth ₹1.28 crore – ₹8.4 crore in all. And from HUF he has inherited moveable assets worth ₹ 1.57 crore.



Basavaraj Bommai

The Chief Minister owns immovable self-acquired assets with a purchase value of ₹3.52 crore and the current market value of the immovable property is ₹22.95 core. As the 'karta' (head) of the HUF, he has inherited immovable assets worth ₹19.2 crore.

The Chief Minister owes ₹5.79 crore to various banks and financial institutions

Mr. Bommai owes ₹5.79 crore to various banks and financial institutions and his daughter has a loan of ₹15 lakh.

As per his income tax returns filed for 2021-22, he has a total annual income of ₹41.09 lakh and his wife has an income of ₹2.69 lakh. and his daughter has an income of ₹5.49 lakh. The annual income of the HUF is ₹52.06 lakh.

In 2018

During the 2018 Assembly elections, Mr. Bommai had declared family assets worth ₹8.92 crore and his liabilities were ₹4.99 crore.

In the present affidavit, Mr. Bommai has declared that he has inherited moveable and immovable assets worth ₹20.77 crore from the HUF. Mr. Bommai has also declared that he purchased three acres of agricultural land at Tarihal on the outskirts of Hubballi for of ₹81 lakh on March 26, 2022. Mr. Bommai was sworn in as Chief Minister on July 28, 2021.

Allegations of favouring Alstom are false: CMRL

BJP T.N. president K. Annamalai had alleged that ₹200 crore was paid to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, who was then Dy. CM, through two shell companies, for awarding contract to a particular MNC

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has denied the allegations that tender regulations were tweaked for the award of a contract in the Phase-I project.

On Friday, BJP Tamil Nadu president K. Annamalai had alleged that ₹200 crore was paid to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, who was then Deputy Chief Minister, through two shell companies, for awarding the contract to a particular MNC.

CMRL, in a statement, has said the allegations are "false" and "factually incorrect". "It has been alleged that undue advantage was given to Alstom Transport during the procurement of rolling stock in 2010 for Phase I of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) by an addendum issued on the applicability of customs duty on the trains procured," the statement said.

For Phase-I that was funded by the Government of India, the State government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), tenders were floated to purchase 42 four-coach trains. On September 23, 2009, the pre-qualification bid was called and four bidders pre-qualified.

They were Alstom Transport SA, France, and Alstom Projects India Ltd; Bombardier Transportation Gmbh, Germany, and Bombardier Transportation India; CAF Spain-Mitsubishi Consortium; and BEML-Hyundai Rotem Consortium.

CMRL said it issued an addendum because after the bids were invited, a notification was issued by the Central government with regard to 'deemed export' benefits for projects funded by JICA.

"As per the above notification, projects funded by JICA were made eligible for 'deemed exports' benefits, meaning even if the manufacturing of products is done in India, the union excise duty exemption would be available to them, deeming them as the products exported to foreign countries," the statement said.

It was not a specific policy change and was a "generic direction" to encourage and boost "local manufacturing in India" of products purchased for projects whose funding come from important international agencies, the statement said.

CMRL had invited bids prior to this notification and hence tender conditions had to be modified to bring down the cost and provide the benefits to the project. CMRL said it issued Addendum No. 4 to communicate to all the pre-qualified bidders the availability of 'deemed exports' benefits.

Motorised boats in A.P. to stay anchored as fishing ban kicks in

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

As many as 23,000 mechanised and motorised boats will not go for fishing in the territorial waters in Bay of Bengal from Saturday midnight. The Andhra Pradesh government has announced a ban on fishing in deep sea for 61 days.

The Fisheries Department issued orders under Section 4 of the A.P. Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1994. Officials of the Department of Fisheries, in association with Coastal Security Police, Revenue, Coast Guard and Navy would patrol the sea for implementing the ban strictly, said Commissioner of Fisheries K. Kanna Babu.

"The objective of the ban is to observe conservation measures during the breeding season of prawn and other marine species. Any fisherman or boat owner who violates the ban orders will face penalty and the vessel will be seized. They will also lose all government benefits," the Commissioner said.

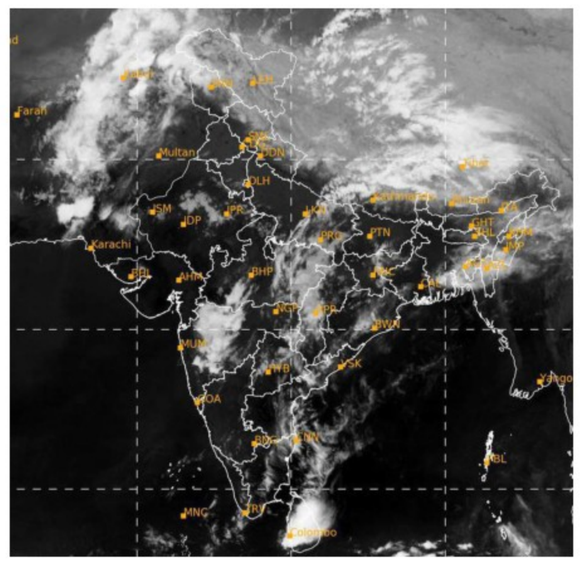
The ban is only in the territorial waters of the sea, but not in rivers and other water bodies.

However, there are no restrictions for traditional boats, the Fisheries officials said.

"About 8.5 lakh families depend on fishing in A.P., and the government will extend financial aid of ₹10,000 each to about 1.5 lakh fishermen during the ban period," an official said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 20.30 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty wind likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Odisha and Telangana. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over Bihar, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	39.3	25.0	Kozhikode	—	37.2	27.8
Ahmedabad	—	40.0	25.2	Kurnool	—	41.3	26.5
Aizawl	—	—	17.1	Lucknow	—	39.5	22.3
Allahabad	—	44.2	23.0	Madurai	—	39.4	24.5
Bengaluru	—	35.1	22.3	Mangaluru	—	35.2	26.5
Bhopal	—	—	22.6	Mumbai	—	34.6	25.0
Bhubaneswar	—	41.7	26.0	Mysuru	—	35.0	24.6
Chandigarh	—	40.5	21.3	New Delhi	—	40.5	20.0
Chennai	—	37.7	24.5	Patna	—	41.6	23.1
Coimbatore	—	37.2	24.5	Port Blair	—	34.2	25.1
Dehradun	—	37.0	19.4	Puducherry	—	35.7	25.2
Gangtok	—	24.7	16.0	Pune	—	38.1	22.6
Goa	—	35.6	25.2	Raipur	—	41.6	28.2
Guwahati	—	36.9	21.8	Ranchi	—	37.4	25.6
Hubballi	—	38.0	23.0	Shillong	—	27.7	16.2
Hyderabad	2	36.4	23.3	Shimla	—	25.3	15.0
Imphal	—	32.8	16.8	Srinagar	—	27.2	9.1
Jaipur	—	39.0	25.2	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.1	26.9
Kochi	—	32.8	28.2	Tiruchi	—	38.7	24.0
Kohima	—	26.4	15.2	Vijayawada	—	39.6	25.6
Kolkata	—	40.2	27.4	Visakhapatnam	—	34.2	28.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	5	4	3	120	198	
Bengaluru	8	50	35	110	128	
Chennai	2	90	101	86	80	
Delhi	35	60	24	258	353	
Hyderabad	16	3	61	62	102	
Kolkata	27	22	26	147	202	
Lucknow	75	93	46	319	233	
Mumbai	11	—	48	199	153	
Pune	17	29	42	255	165	
Visakhapatnam	21	48	43	113	149	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Muzaffarpur, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 320 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Damoh, Madhya Predesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 28

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

NCP jumps into poll fray in Karnataka

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

With the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) stepping into the Karnataka poll fray, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday held a meeting with party leaders as well as NCP leaders and workers from Karnataka to finalise the plans for the upcoming Assembly election in the neighbouring State.

The NCP's Karnataka State president Hari. R said that the party was set to contest on at least 40 of the 224 Assembly seats and claimed that a number of sitting BJP legislators were keen to join Mr. Pawar's party as the NCP's ideology appealed to them.

"Just two days ago, a BJP MLC resigned and joined NCP saying that he liked the NCP's ideology. At least four to five sitting MLAs are expected to leave BJP and join the NCP. A former Mayor of Bengaluru city is also likely to join the NCP," said Mr. Hari, speaking in Mumbai.

He said that the NCP's Karnataka team had come to meet Mr. Pawar in order to finalise tickets for the Karnataka Assembly election to be held on May 10.

"Many leaders who have quit the BJP are looking at the NCP favourably because of our ideology. We will give tickets to such candidates. We are looking

Sharad Pawar

to contest seats across Karnataka and not just the Marathi-speaking areas," said Mr. Hari.

While defections of several sitting BJP MLAs have given hope to the Congress, the decision of its allies like the NCP to fight separately has resulted in speculation whether Mr. Pawar's move might create a fresh schism within the tripartite MVA alliance in Maharashtra (of the Thackeray-led Shiv Sena faction, the NCP and the Congress).

However, the NCP's ally, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut dismissed suggestions that there would a rift within the MVA as a result of the NCP contesting polls separately in Karnataka.

"What if there has been no alliance there [in Karnataka]? We [Shiv Sena (UBT)] too are planning to contest polls in Karnataka. It is not going to affect the MVA in Maharashtra," Mr. Raut said.

Elections are slated to be held in Karnataka in a single phase on May 10.

Infirm patient dragged due to absence of wheelchair

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Conflicting claims were raised after a video of an infirm patient being dragged by his parents to the doctor's room in a hospital went viral. The incident allegedly took place on March 31 due to non-availability of stretchers or wheelchairs at the Nizamabad Government General Hospital in Telangana.

Reacting to the video that went viral 15 days after the incident, Health Minister T. Harish Rao has ordered an inquiry and immediate submission of report by the Director of Medical Education.

According to the patient's relatives, the incident took place around 10 p.m. after the closure of the out-patient department where emergencies and new admissions are registered.

They said that the patient, who was unconscious, was forced to lie down on the floor throughout the night and dragged into the room by his legs next morning.

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder

Call our toll-free number
1800 102 1878
Or write to us at
customercare@thehindu.co.in

Scan the QR code to register your feedback

THE HINDU businessline.
FRONTLINE SPORTSTAR Young World THE HINDU

राजस्थान सरकार
कार्यालय जिला कलक्टर, भीलवाड़ा
(कलेक्ट्रेट परिसर प्रथम तल कमरा नम्बर 105 दूरभाष नम्बर 01482–232601)
Website:- www.bhilwara.rajasthan.gov.in E-mail:- dm-ace-bhi-rj@nic.in
क्रमांक/लेखा/2022–23/37190 दिनांक :–15/4/2023

Notice Inviting Bid

Bids for **the selection of agency for infrastructural arrangements for organizing Mahangai Rahat Camps at Each Gram Panchayats, Wards of Urban Areas and other identified permanent locations of Bhilwara** are invited from interest bidders upto 19-04-2023 2:00 PM Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the on http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and procurement portal (http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in) of the state.

UBN : CBL2324SLOB00001

Add'l. District Collector
Bhilwara

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my client has entered into Agreements to purchase the Schedule property from its Owners: Sri.B.PRASANNA KUMAR also known as B.Prasan Kumar and Sri.B.RAMESH KUMAR both sons of Sri.Bikamchand, residing in the Schedule property.

Apart from the said owners, if any other person/s have any manner of right, title and or interest or claim or charge or lien over the Schedule property or otherwise have any lawful objection/s for this sale transaction, they are hereby called upon to file their objection/s in writing, along with the photocopies of documents on which they rely, with the undersigned, within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

Item No.1 property owned by Sri.B.PRASANNA KUMAR:

All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.19, PID No.76-83-19, measuring East to West 18ft and North to South 27ft 6inches, with a building thereon, situated at Bowee Lane 'A' Street & Bowee Lane 'B' Street, Ashoknagar, Bengaluru and bounded on:

East by : Private Property
West by : Property of Sri.B.Ramesh Kumar
North by : Bowee Lane 'A' Street
South by : Bowee Lane 'B' Street

Item No.2 property owned by Sri.B.RAMESH KUMAR:

All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.19/1, PID No.76-83-19/1, measuring East to West 17ft and North to South 27ft 6inches, with a building thereon, situated at Bowee Lane 'A' Street & Bowee Lane 'B' Street, Ashoknagar, Bengaluru and bounded on:

East by : Property of Sri.B.Prasanna Kumar
West by : Property of Smt.LeelaBai
North by : Bowee Lane 'A' Street
South by : Bowee Lane 'B' Street

Sd/- Goutam Chand S.F
Advocate
Goutam Associates
No.60, 2nd Floor, Kanakapura Road,
Basavanagudi, Bangalore – 560 004

INSTITUTE OF LIVER & BILIARY SCIENCES (ILBS)
Deemed-to-be-University

Advertisement ILBS Academic 01/2023
Entrance Examination for Ph.D/PDCC/PGCC/ Fellowship and Certificate Courses

Institute of Liver & Biliary Sciences (ILBS) is an autonomous super-specialty institute of excellence under Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi. The Deemed-to-be-University status was conferred to ILBS by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under section 3 of the UGC Act 1956

The Institute is inviting application for the entrance examination for following Ph.D, PDCC, PGCC, Fellowship and Certificate courses for the academic session starting from 01st July 2023, as per the details given on the Institute's website **https://www.ilbs.in**

S. No.	Name of the Course	Seats
1.	Ph.D Molecular and Cellular Medicine	03#
2.	Ph.D Hepatology	02##
3.	PDCC Organ Transplant Anaesthesia	02+01*
4.	PDCC in Interventional Radiology	02+01*
5.	PDCC in Hepatopathology	02+01*
6.	PDCC in Nephrology	02+01*
7.	PDCC in Transplant Virology	02+01*
8.	PDCC in Diagnostic Virology	01
9.	PDCC Critical Care Medicine	02+01*
10.	PDCC in GI Medical Oncology	02+01*
11.	PDCC in HPB and GI Advanced Radiation Oncology	02+01*
12.	PDCC in Gastro Radiology	02+01*
13.	PDCC in Blood Banking & Immunohaematology	02+01*
14.	PDCC in Advanced Diagnostic and Clinical Microbiology	02+01*
15.	PDCC in Apheresis Technology and Blood Component Therapy	02+01*
16.	PDCC in Cellular Transplant Immunology	01
17.	PDCC in Hepatology	04
18.	PDCC in Advanced Clinical Biochemistry	02
19.	PDCC Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine	01+01*
20.	PDCC in Hepato-Hematology	01
21.	PGCC in Clinical Nutrition	02~
22.	PGCC in Epidemiology of Viral Hepatitis and Liver Diseases	02~
23.	PGCC in Clinical Research in Liver Diseases	02~
24.	PGCC in Clinical Bioinformatics	10^
25.	Fellowship in Advanced Hepatology	02
26.	Certificate course in Nephrology	01+01*
27.	Critical Care Certification Course	02
28.	Certificate Course in Biostatistics	10

* Sponsored Seat
#NET Qualified 02 seats and Non-NET 01 seat
NET Qualified
~ PGCC course - One year duration
^ PGCC course- 06 months duration
Note:- The NET qualified candidates are exempted from written examination and directly eligible to appear in Departmental Assessment Exam/Interview.

Last Date to apply: **07/05/2023**. Please visit website **http://www.ilbs.in** for detailed Advertisement

Controller of Examination

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that our clients **Saraswati N W/o.Narasimha Murthy K** and Her son **Samuel Nikhil** are intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from **B.Prabhakaran S/o.Late.A. Bhagyanathan,** any person/s objecting for the proposed purchase or are having any right, title, interest or any type of claim over the scheduled property is hereby called upon to file their objections/claims what so ever along with documentary proof within **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice with the under mentioned advocate failing which; our clients shall proceed and complete the sale transaction with the above stated person.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Site No.9, Katha No.617, formed out of Property No.35/4, Situated at **Maralukunte Village, Jala Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore** measuring : East to West 30 Feet and North to South 50 Feet in all measuring 1500 Square Feet and bounded on the:

East by : Road, West by : Site No.10, North by : Road, South by : Site No.8.

C.K.V.K. LAW ASSOCIATES
Mr. VENKATESH CHANDRAN M.A., L.L.B.
Advocates & Legal Consultants
Bangalore-43. M: 9845846428, 7204863700

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our Clients negotiated to transact with the owner of the Schedule Property viz., **M/s. SATAREM ENTERPRISE PRIVATE LIMITED,** having its registered office at 105 D, Mettupalayam Road, G.N. Mills, Coimbatore – 641 029 and had its Branch Office #50, Shree Chitrapur Bhavan, Commercial Complex, 5th Floor, 8th Main, 15th Cross, Malleswaram, Bangalore – 560 055, represented by its Director, **Mr. Aadarsh Sivaraman** has represented that the aforesaid Company viz., **M/s. SATAREM ENTERPRISE PRIVATE LIMITED** is the sole and absolute owner of immovable properties as mentioned in the Schedule hereunder situated at **GORUR Village, SOLUR Hobli, MAGADI Taluk, RAMANAGARA District.**

Any person/s having objection for the transaction with the above Company/person/s in respect of the Schedule Property or claims to have any right, title or interest in the Schedule Property, he/she shall intimate the same in writing with documentary evidence to the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. In the event no such claim is received within the stipulated time, our client shall proceed with aforesaid transaction as if no such claim exists or that they have been waived or abandoned.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of immovable properties being vacant land situated at **GORUR Village, SOLUR Hobli, MAGADI Taluk, RAMANAGARA District** and comprised in the following:

Sl. No.	New Survey No.	Old Survey No.	Extent	
			Acre	Guntas
1	31/4		01	17
2	32/5		01	17
3	32/7		02	12
4	32/8		00	16
5	32/12		07	30
6	32/13		01	07
7	32/15		00	35
8	32/16		00	32
9	32/17		01	14
10	32/18		00	05
11	32/20	32/3	00	20 ½
12	32/21	32/14	00	24 ½
13	33/16A1	33/16A	00	07
14	33/16B1	33/16B	00	06
15	33/37	33/8	02	10
16	33/38	33/9	00	27
17	33/39	33/10	01	12 ½
18	135	30/22	02	00
19	136	30/21	00	18
20	137	30/20	00	28
21	138	30/19	00	25
		Total	**27**	**04 ½**

together with all rights appurtenances whatsoever hereunder or underneath or above the surface.

Sd/-
DIVYA VANI H.K., B.A., LL.M.
Advocate
RAVI LOBO & CO.,
No. 37/7, Meanee Avenue,
Tank Road,S.C. Garden,
Bangalore – 560 042,
Ph: (080) 25591702 / 41123363

Place: Bangalore
Dated: 15/04/2023

IN THE COURT OF REGIONAL MSE FACILITATION COUNCIL, MADURAI REGION

(As per the interest on Delayed payments to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act 27 of 2006)

O.P.70 /MSEFC/Madurai/2022

Thiru S. Sanjay,
M/s. True Waves Associates,
Plot No.1, Sambakulam 1st Main Road,
Madurai – 625 007.
Tamilnadu. – Petitioner

M/s.Mantri Technology Constellation Pvt.Ltd.,
41, Mantri House, VittalMaliya Road,
Bangalore – 560 001.
Karnataka State.
Mobile : 99402 54927 – Respondent

NOTICE

Where as the above Petitioner Constructed Civil works on contract basis for 15 Villas to the Respondent **M/s. Mantri Technology Constellation Pvt Ltd., - Bangalore** vide Work Orders EWSSV/38,67,92, 91,136,125,130,135 dt.13.10.2016 and the Outstanding due amount of Rs.64,93,836/- with interest @ 24% P.A from 13.08.2020. Council directed the Respondent to appear before this council through Video Conference or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all contract base Civil works questions relating to this suit on21.04.2023 at 9.30 a.m. through video conferencing to answer the claim and the Respondent is directed to produce on that day all the documents Upon which the Respondent intend to reply in support of the defense. In this regard, Kindly contact DIC GM (Contact No.0452-2537621) for this video Conferencing link. take notice that, in default of your appearance (thro' Video Conferencing) on the day Mentioned, the petitioner will be heard and determined in your Absence as Exparte.

S. Sanjay,
M/s. True Waves Associates,
Madurai – 625 007.Tamilnadu.
– Petitioner

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my clients have entered into an Agreement to purchase the Schedule property from its Owner: CIWAN STRATEGY PRIVATE LIMITED Company, having its registered office at: No.004, Lelehzar Apartment, 45/1, Palace Road, Bengaluru-560009.

Apart from the said Owner, if any other person/s have any manner of right, title and or interest or claim or charge or lien over the Schedule property or otherwise have any lawful objection/s for this sale transaction, they are hereby called upon to file their objection/s in writing, along with the photocopies of documents on which they rely, with the undersigned, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

Item No.1: All that piece and parcel of the converted land bearing **Sy.No.90/1 measuring 1 Acre 34 Guntas,** situated at **Ilthore Village,** Kundana Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on:

East by : Land bearing Sy.No.90/2
West by : Land bearing Sy.No.98
North by : Land bearing Sy.No.99
South by : Land bearing Sy.Nos.96, 91 and 89

Item No.2: All that piece and parcel of the converted land bearing **Sy.No.99 measuring 1 Acre 39 Guntas,** situated at **Ilthore Village,** Kundana Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on:

East by : Land bearing Sy.No.100 and 101
West by : Land bearing Sy.No.98
North by : Land bearing Sy.No.100 and Chowdappanahalli Village Border
South by : Road and remaining portion of the land bearing same Sy.No.99

Item No.3: All that piece and parcel of the converted land bearing **Sy.No.99 measuring 6 Acres 35 Guntas,** situated at **Ilthore Village,** Kundana Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on:

East by : Land bearing Sy.No.101
West by : Land bearing Sy.No.98
North by : Road and remaining portion of the land bearing same Sy. No.99
South by : Land bearing Sy.No.90/1

Sd/- Goutam Chand S.F
Advocate
Goutam Associates
No.60, 2nd Floor, Kanakapura Road,
Basavanagudi, Bangalore – 560 004

From Page One

Top-notch toilets to usher in change

Experts, though, expressed caution. "Before beginning any such project, a proper study has to be done on the location and the way they will be maintained," Bindeshwar Pathak, founder of Sulabh International, said. He added that a good business model to explore would be cross-subsidising the maintenance of these toilets across locations.

The aspirational toilets scheme was launched in September 2022 as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2.0, with an aim to help make cities open defecation free. The Centre has allocated ₹1,41,600 crore to the SBM 2.0, which is 2.5 times more than the money allotted to the first phase of the mission that was launched in 2014.

As of now, 6,36,826 public toilets have been constructed under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, against a target of 5,07,587. 4,355 urban local bodies have been declared open defecation-free.

Opposition targets PM over Malik's claims

In the interview, Mr. Malik said the Prime Minister was "not particularly averse to corruption" and did not take action against the Goa government when Mr. Malik pointed it out to him as the Governor of the State and he was subsequently transferred to Meghalaya.

He also said that his appointment with President Droupadi Murmu was cancelled at the last minute when he was Governor and claimed that the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) decides the appointments list for the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Mr. Malik also said "people have started believing that the Prime Minister is interested in the financial dealings of the Adani Group" and the government has not been able to answer Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's questions.

The Congress also demanded answers from the Centre on the outcome of the probe into the 2019 Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed. Addressing a press conference along with party leaders Pawan Khera and Supriya Shrinate, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh accused the BJP-led Union government of adopting a strategy of "silence" on every key issue.

Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Admi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal cited Mr. Malik's interview to target the BJP over corruption. "Satya Pal Malik *ji* has said that Modi *ji* is not averse to corruption. I am not saying this but one of their own... In the same interview, he also said some BJP Chief Ministers indulge in corruption and collect money. They don't keep all the money to themselves but send the money to above and from there, it is invested in the companies of their friend," he said.

Ex-MP Atiq, brother Ashraf shot dead

One of the alleged attackers shouted the slogan '*Jai Shri Ram*', as he was being apprehended by the police.

Section 144 invoked

Mr. Ahmed and his brother, a former MLA, had been taken into police custody on April 13 in connection with the February 24 murder of Umesh Pal, the key witness in the 2005 murder of Bahujan Samaj Party MLA Raju Pal.

The police have invoked Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) in all districts of Uttar Pradesh to maintain law and order in the State, prohibiting assembly of more than four persons. Special Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar reached the residence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to brief him about the incident.

The Opposition lashed out at the State government, with Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav alleging that crime had reached its zenith in the State. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) alleged that such an incident could not have happened without approval "from the top".

CAPF to hold examinations in 13 regional languages

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Saturday said that examinations to recruit constables in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) will be conducted in 13 regional languages in addition to Hindi and English. The new arrangement will kick in from January 1, 2024.

The decision comes days after Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and Telangana Minister K.T. Rama Rao urged Home Minister Amit Shah to revise the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) national recruitment notification to include Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and other official languages.

The Ministry said Mr. Shah took the decision to give impetus to participation of local youth in the CAPFs and encourage regional languages. This will result in lakhs of aspirants taking the exam in their regional language, improving their prospects, it added.

13 of a music troupe killed as bus falls into gorge in Raigad

The bus fell from the Bor Ghat mountain pass section when the driver lost control of the vehicle; Prime Minister, Maharashtra Chief Minister announce *ex gratia* for the next of kin of the deceased

Shoumojit Banerjee
MUMBAI

At least 13 persons, three of them minors, were killed and 29 injured after a private bus in which they were travelling hurtled into a gorge along the old Mumbai-Pune highway in Raigad district of Maharashtra early on Saturday, police said.

According to authorities, the accident occurred around 3.30 a.m. when the bus, heading from Pune to Goregaon in Mumbai and carrying 42 persons, who were members of a traditional '*Dhol-Tasha-Zaanj*' music troupe, fell into a 300-foot-deep gorge in the Bor Ghat mountain pass section, better known as the Khandala Ghat, after the driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle.

A team of local police officials and a trekker's group were engaged in the rescue operation. The death toll is expected to rise, fear authorities.

Raigad Superintendent of Police (SP) Somnath Gharge said the injured were admitted to the Khopoli Rural Hospital.

Expressing grief at the tragedy, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has announced an *ex gratia* compensation of ₹5 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased.

The Prime Minister's Office also announced an *ex gratia* of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased.

In a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Mr. Shinde further said that the State government would bear the expenses for the treatment of the injured.

(With PTI inputs)

Out of control: Wrecked remains of a bus that fell into a gorge on Mumbai-Pune highway in Raigad district of Maharashtra on Saturday. PTI

11 killed, dozens hurt after tractor-trolley falls off bridge in U.P.

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Last year, the State government had asked citizens to use such vehicles only for transferring goods and not for carrying passengers

At least 11 people were killed and more than a dozen injured after a tractor-trolley fell off a bridge in Shahjahanpur of Uttar Pradesh on Saturday.

The passengers on the tractor-trolley were on their way to fetch water from the Garra river near Birsinghpur village on the Tilhar-Nigohi road when the incident happened.

Top district officials, including the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, reached the spot to oversee rescue operations. The bodies of the victims have been sent for post-mortem. The injured were shifted to a nearby government hospital.

Proper treatment

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed condolences over the loss of lives in the accident, and directed the administration to ensure proper treatment for the injured.

"Distressed by the accident in Shahjahanpur district. Condolences to the bereaved families. I have directed the senior officers to immediately go to the spot and conduct relief and rescue operations. Directions have also been issued for the treatment of the injured," a tweet from the Chief Minister's official Twitter handle said.

Mr. Adityanath wished for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Last year, after a series of incidents in Uttar Pradesh involving a tractor-trolley, the State government had asked citizens to use the vehicle only for transferring goods and not for carrying passengers.

Police officers visit riot-hit areas of Sambalpur

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESHWAR

Senior police officers, including Director-General of Police Sunil Bansal, on Saturday visited communal violence-hit localities in the western Odisha town of Sambalpur as confidence-building measures after the situation worsened following the murder of a person and large-scale arson.

The State government had earlier imposed curfew for an indefinite period and extended the suspension of Internet services for another 48 hours to prevent the spread of rumours.

Mr. Bansal visited the sensitive area, and said he would camp at Sambalpur on Saturday to monitor the security arrangements.

A person identified as Chintamani Mirdha was stabbed to death here.

Chinese dual-use facilities in Myanmar and Sri Lanka raise security concerns in India

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The construction of a military facility on Coco Islands in Myanmar and a proposed remote satellite receiving ground station system in Sri Lanka, both coming up with Chinese help, have raised concern in India of possible surveillance across the region.

Recent satellite images show the construction of a military facility on Coco Islands, located very close to the Andaman and Nicobar island chain. In the second case, China has proposed setting up a remote satellite receiving ground station system through a collaborative effort between the Aerospace Information Research Institute, under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the University of Ruhuna in southern Sri Lanka. Given its critical location, it can be used to spy on Indian assets and intercept sensitive information and also across the region, sources in the security establishment said.

One of these sources, on condition of anonymity, cited intelligence inputs on what is believed to be a complete military base being built entirely by the Chinese on the Coco Islands. "There are obvious concerns. There was a radome [dome-shaped structure to protect radars] spotted on the island recently through satellite images," the source said, adding that the island is being connected to the southern landmass using a new bridge that is 175 m in length and approximately 8 m wide.

The facility can always be used by the Chinese military when required, the source stated.

Last month, the London-based think tank Chatham House published a report based on the satellite imagery of January 2023 from Maxar Technologies, which showed large-scale construction activity on the strategic archipelago. "Visible are two new hangars, a new causeway and what appears to be an accommodation block, all of which are visible in proximity to a freshly lengthened 2,300-metre runway and radar station. Visible as of late March on the southern tip of Great Coco, just beyond the causeway connecting the islands, is evidence of land clearing efforts indicating construction work to come," the report said.

Noting that satellite tracking facilities are inherently dual use in nature, sources said that the Chinese civil space programme is known to work closely with the Chinese military.

China's expanding ground stations in the region could potentially be used to intercept sensitive information about Indian assets, another source said on condition of anonymity. The source said that India's satellite launch facilities in Sriharikota and the integrated missile test range in Odisha could come under the scanner of the ground station, and launches from there could be tracked to obtain sensitive data.

Referring to the recent instance of a Chinese research and survey vessel docking at Hambantota in Sri Lanka, sources said the stations are likely to work in coordination with such vessels to gather vital information in the region.

For example, space tracking and surveillance ships can perform many of the same functions as ground stations, with the added benefit of mobility, the source noted.

Vital info: Yuan Wang 5, the Chinese research vessel which docked at the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka. FILE PHOTO

Families of fishermen jailed in India, Pakistan cry for help; 749 languish in prisons for years

Mahesh Langa
AHMEDABAD

Fishing community outfits in India and Pakistan have urged the Prime Ministers of both countries to immediately release the 749 fishermen who are languishing in prisons on both sides of the border for years.

The community leaders have implored the two governments to release the fishermen in the month of Ramzan as a humanitarian act.

"As many as four Indian fishermen died in Pakistan jails last year and their bodies came after almost a month of their deaths," said Velji Masani, president of Akhil Bharatiya Fishermen Association and a fishing community leader, adding that the families of these fishermen live in extreme poverty with no means for subsistence.

"There are 666 Indian fishermen who are languishing in jails in Pakistan. Of these, 559 are from Gujarat, 46 from the Union Territory of Diu, 30 from Maharashtra, 23 from Uttar Pradesh, four from Bihar and one from Goa," Mr. Masani said at a press conference held in Ahmedabad.

The letters written to the Prime Ministers of both countries have signatories from the National Fishworkers Forum (India), South Asian Solidarity Conclave, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum and Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy.

A press conference was also held in Lahore, Pakistan, on Thursday, appealing for the release of Pakistani fishers in Indian jails.

Similar pleas

"The way we had a press conference in Gujarat to highlight the issue to the Indian government, a similar conference was organised at the Lahore Press Club to make a similar appeal to the Pakistani government. We have requested both Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to release the fishermen unconditionally," said Jatin Desai, journalist and peace activist who works for freeing of fishermen of both countries.

Usmangani, National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) leader, emphasised the release of arrested fishermen and the reconstitution of the Joint Judicial Committee on prisoners.

"They are extremely poor people. Nothing is recovered from their possession except their fishing tools. Maximum sentence they can be awarded is just three months' imprisonment. But they spend several miserable years in jail," he said, adding governments of both countries must release them immediately.

According to Mr. Masani, of the 666 Indian fishermen – all caught after October 17, 2018 – a total of 631 have completed their sentences and their nationalities have also been confirmed.

Similarly, according to information cited by him, there are 83 Pakistani fishermen in Indian jails of which 50 have completed their sentences.

He added that these fishermen should be released as there is nothing against them.

Border crossing

The community leaders highlighted the issues of fishers of both India and Pakistan who are arrested for trespassing water borders, charged with violation of the Passport Act of the respective country and imprisoned after trial by courts with prison sentences of a few months. They pointed out that their release is never as prompt as their arrests.

During fishing expeditions, fishermen sometimes cross the International Maritime Border in the Arabian Sea, between India and Pakistan. They are caught by the respective agencies of Pakistan and India and they are charged with violation of the Passport Act of the respective countries and are sentenced for a period of three to six months.

School of requests: Fishing community leaders appeal for the release of fishermen, at a press conference. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Commanders' meet of Army in hybrid mode for first time

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The first edition of the biannual Army Commanders' Conference (ACC) for 2023 is scheduled to be held from April 17 to 21 which, for the first time, will be conducted in hybrid format, exploiting available technology for secure communication, wherein Army Commanders and other senior functionaries will meet virtually on the first day and then travel to Delhi to balance physical meetings on matters which require detailed deliberations, the Army said on Saturday.

The forum will also review the progress on the activities charted out as part of 'Year of Transformation-2023' along with advancement on Agnipath scheme, it stated.

The apex leadership of the Army will also brainstorm security scenario apart from reviewing operational preparedness of the force.

BJP questions credibility of Satya Pal, flags statements

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP IT cell in-charge, Amit Malviya, in a series of tweets, reacted to former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik's accusations against Prime Minister Modi's handling of the Pulwama attack, saying that Mr. Malik's frequent changes of statements "raises serious questions on his credibility".

In the tweets, Mr. Malviya pointed out three instances where Mr. Malik's statements had either been admitted as lies or were at variance with what he has said in his interview to *The Wire*.

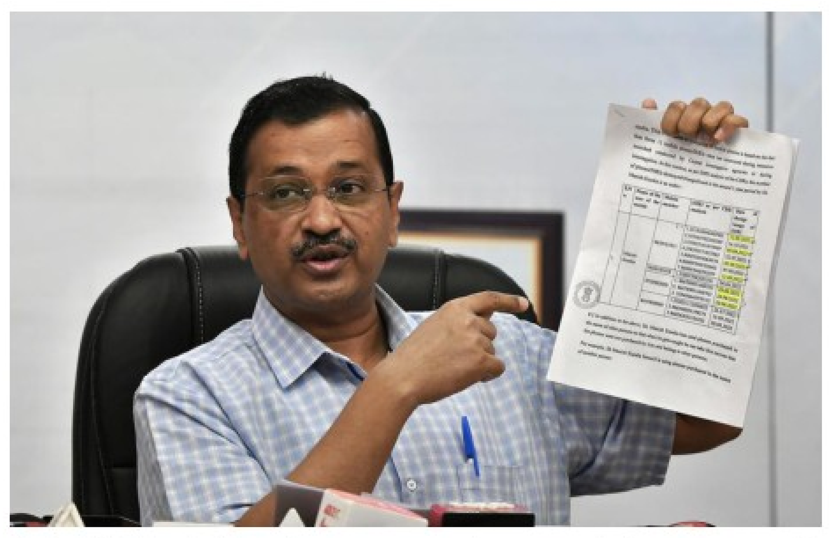
He attached two videos, one from 2018, where Mr. Malik claimed that Mr. Modi was the "best Prime Minister", and the second of a clip of the now-aired interview, where he criticised Mr. Modi's handling of Jammu and Kashmir.

Another tweet attached a clip of Mr. Malik admitting that he had lied about a purported conversation between him and Union Home Minister Amit Shah with less than flattering references to Mr. Modi.

If BJP orders arrest, how can CBI disobey, Kejriwal on summons

State Assembly called tomorrow to discuss issue; Delhi CM accuses the ED and CBI of presenting 'false' evidence in court and lying on oath

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI


Arvind Kejriwal addressing a press conference on being summoned for questioning in the Delhi excise police case. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has been called for questioning by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday in connection with the alleged excise policy scam, implied on Saturday that the BJP had given orders to the agency to arrest him.

"BJP leaders have been saying since yesterday that Kejriwal will be arrested. So, if BJP has given orders to the CBI to arrest, then how can CBI disobey their orders? They will have to follow BJP's orders," Mr. Kejriwal said, on being asked whether he thought he would be arrested on Sunday.

He also confirmed that he would appear before the CBI on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Aam Aadmi Party is planning to make Mr. Kejriwal's appearance before the CBI a show of strength, with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Delhi Cabinet Ministers, AAP MPs and other leaders set to accompany him to the CBI office. Sources also said that a one-day session of the Delhi Assembly has been called for Monday to discuss the CBI's summons to Mr. Kejriwal.

However, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri slammed the move and requested Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena to not allow it. Mr. Kejriwal said that the day he spoke against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's alleged corruption in the Delhi Assembly, he knew that he would be next.

The AAP chief also alleged that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the CBI "lied" on oath and on affidavit, and presented "false" evidence in court about the alleged scam.

Day before Delhi CM's questioning, BJP says he is 'trembling with fear'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal received a summons from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to appear on Sunday for questioning in the excise policy case, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday launched a scathing attack at him, and said that he was "trembling with fear".

BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia dared the Delhi Chief Minister to take a lie detector test to prove that he has nothing to hide. "But you will not do it because you are scared inside," he said at a press conference.

Mounting an attack: BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh with Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva at a press conference. PTI

Questions for the CM

Mr. Bhatia also asked Mr. Kejriwal to answer various questions regarding the now-withdrawn excise policy.

"We have asked him five questions and I dare him to answer even one of them. He will beat around the bush and evade these questions," he said.

His questions included: "Why should you not be held accountable when it was you who presided over the meeting in which this liquor scam was hatched? If your liquor policy was so good, then why was it withdrawn? Arvind Kejriwal *ji* should tell the public whether he talked to Sameer Mahendru on FaceTime or not."

Later in the day, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said that Mr. Kejriwal was speaking "Atiq Ahmad's language" today, referring to the Uttar Pradesh gangster who was shot dead late in the day.

"This morning, we all heard that gangster Atiq Ahmed telling the police to first bring the phone with which he had talked, then he will tell with whom he had talked to; and on the same lines this afternoon, Arvind Kejriwal said, 'First bring that ₹100 crore whose scam you are talking about, then I will accept whether the scam happened or not'," Mr. Sachdeva said.

He also asked five questions to the Chief Minister, warning that unless Mr. Kejriwal answered them, the BJP would send him the same questions through letters from 100 people each day.

"Why was ₹144 crore of the liquor mafia forgiven? Why was the policy withdrawn right after the CBI initiated a probe into it? The Chief Minister should clarify on his party's relationship with liquor baron Dinesh Arora," Mr. Sachdeva said.

At a press conference with Mr. Sachdeva, BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh took pot-shots at Mr. Kejriwal's statement, in which he had said "if Kejriwal is a thief or corrupt, then there isn't a single honest man in this world". Mr. Sahib Singh said, "If Kejriwal is honest, then nobody is a thief in the world."

"Kejriwal looks scared today. Perhaps he has realised that now it is his turn to go to jail, which he would not have thought even in his dream, because he did not keep a single department with him and did not sign any file," he said.

'Not a judge'

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the Delhi Chief Minister should not act "like a judge".

"Kejriwal is the mastermind behind the liquor scam, but now when the heat of the CBI investigation has reached him, he has started thinking of himself as a judge instead of an accused," Mr. Bidhuri said.

Delhi CM supports Stalin's 'time limit for Governors' pitch

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

T.N. CM urged his counterparts to push Centre to fix a time frame for Governors to approve Bills

Offering support to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, his Delhi counterpart and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said he would table a resolution in the Delhi Assembly urging the Union government to fix a time limit for Governors and Lieutenant-Governors to carry out their constitutional functions.

Earlier this week, Mr. Stalin urged Chief Ministers of States ruled by parties other than the BJP to pass resolutions, similar to the one passed in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, in their State Assemblies urging the "Union government and the President to fix a time limit for Governors to approve the Bills passed by the Legislatures".

"It is a foregone conclusion that democracy in India is suffering from blows every single day. Every tenet of our glorious Constitution stands compromised – be it liberty, equality, secularism, or fraternity. It is also beyond doubt that our federal structure, which enfranchised people in the most remote corners, is in grave danger from forces that seek to illegitimately centralise all power," Mr. Kejriwal wrote to Mr. Stalin.

He said the fact that the Governors and the Lieutenant-Governors of non-BJP ruled States and Union Territories were indefinitely holding Bills passed by the Legislative Assemblies was not only a violation of the constitutional scheme, but also a disrespect for the people's mandate which is supreme in any democracy. "The actions of the Lt. Governor is hindering the functioning in every area where our government seeks to make giant strides," he said.

"The interface of State governments and their Governors/Lt. Governors has effectively become a battlefront where a silent war is being waged by the Union government. Governors/Lt. Governors are wilfully undermining democratically elected State governments, and obstructing administration as per their whims and fancies," Mr. Kejriwal said.

The don-turned-politician's empire in U.P. came crashing down in 50 days

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Police personnel escorting Atiq Ahmed and Khalid Azim for a medical exam, moments before they were shot dead. ANI

It took roughly 50 days after the murder of lawyer Umesh Pal for the empire of criminal-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed to be reduced to dust as he was shot dead in Prayagraj on Saturday.

Days earlier, Ahmed, 62, an accused in the Umesh Pal murder case and 100 other cases in Uttar Pradesh, had described his plight in similar words. "I have been totally reduced to dust, but please don't trouble the women and children of my family now," he said from inside a police van.

Facing Opposition heat over the killing of Umesh Pal, a key witness in the murder case of Bahujan Samaj Party MLA Raju Pal, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath vowed in the Assembly on February 25 that his government would make the mafia bite the dust.

On April 13, Asad – Ahmed's 19-year-old son – and his accomplice, Ghulam, both wanted in the murder case and carrying a bounty of ₹5 lakh each, were shot dead in an alleged encounter by Uttar Pradesh Police's Special Task Force near Jhansi.

Though the first criminal case against Ahmed was lodged nearly 44 years ago, it was Umesh Pal's murder on February 24 that prompted the State administration to renew its efforts to crack down on his criminal network.

Crime and politics

Taking advantage of the volatile political environment in the State in the 1990s and early 2000s, Ahmed formed a syndicate that allegedly indulged in extortion and land grabbing.

In 1989, he entered politics and won from the Allahabad West constituency as an Independent candidate. He went on to retain the seat in 1991 and 1993. Three years later, he contested the seat on Samajwadi Party (SP) ticket and succeeded again. He later joined the Apna Dal and was made its State president. He wrested the seat in 2002.

In the 2004 Lok Sabha poll, the SP offered ticket to Ahmed to contest from Phulpur, which he won by a margin of 50,000 votes. The same year, his brother, Khalid Azim, alias Ashraf, contested the Allahabad West bypoll, but lost to the BSP candidate, Raju Pal, by a margin of 5,000 votes.

In January 2005, Raju Pal was murdered, and Ahmed, Ashraf and seven unidentified persons were named as accused in the FIR. In the subsequent bypoll, Ashraf defeated Raju Pal's wife, Puja, by over 11,000 votes.

Rajasthan Cong. to hold feedback talks with MLAs

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Amid the stand-off between Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot, the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee decided to hold feedback meetings with the party MLAs and Independents supporting the ruling party.

The meetings, to understand local issues through a one-on-one dialogue, will be organised in Jaipur from April 17 to 20 for each division of the State.

Mr. Gehlot, accompanied by AICC Rajasthan incharge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and PCC president Govind Singh Dotasra, will interact with them. A party spokesperson said here on Saturday that the MLAs would give their feedback on the State government's functioning, public perception and the issues at the grassroots.

A workshop will be organised on April 19 to deliberate on extending the benefits of the government's welfare schemes to the public at large. Mr. Dotasra said at a conference of OBC department workers here that the party had no factionalism, and it would go to this year's Assembly polls "with unity".

Nitish backs Kejriwal over CBI summons in excise policy case

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Nitish Kumar

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday backed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) summoned the latter for questioning on Sunday in the Delhi liquor excise policy case.

Mr. Kumar slammed the Centre for the action taken against Mr. Kejriwal, alleging that the Narendra Modi government was worried because "Opposition parties are becoming united".

Targets Centre

"I really don't know what all mechanisms they will use but nothing will happen. You all know very well what kind of work is being done against him [Mr. Kejriwal]. He has done a lot of development work in his State and people give a lot of respect to him. He will reply to all action against him at an appropriate time," he said.

On Thursday, Mr. Kumar, along with his Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, met Mr. Kejriwal in Delhi, after meeting Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikarjun Kharge.

Mr. Kumar asserted that he would speak to the leaders of other Opposition parties, including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, when presspersons mentioned her name.

"Yes, of course I will speak to everyone. I just want more and more Opposition parties to contest the election together and when everyone will sit together, everything will be decided. We will go for a nationwide tour together and ultimately, it is for the people of the country to decide," Mr. Kumar said.

On Saturday, Mr. Kumar visited his ancestral house in Bakhtiyarpur along with his family members to provide the details required in the second phase of the State's ongoing caste survey.

No action on criminals from CM's caste: SP

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party (SP) released a list of strongmen belonging to the Rajput community and asked why despite dozens of criminal cases lodged against those on list, no decisive action is being initiated.

It further alleged that these accused are still alive, committing crimes and running syndicates while getting a smooth run due to their caste affiliation with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Shah targets Gehlot on graft, takes jibe at power tussle

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Political potshots: Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Vasundhara Raje and other leaders, in Bharatpur on Saturday. PTI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday took a jibe at the ongoing tussle in the Rajasthan Congress and targeted State Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, saying he was making a greater contribution by bringing "corruption money" to the party's coffers.

The Congress party would invariably give preference to Mr. Gehlot at the cost of former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot, Mr. Shah said.

Addressing a booth-level Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers' meeting in Bharatpur, the Home Minister said Mr. Pilot's turn would not come in the Congress government despite his repeated protests and demonstrations.

"He is no match for Mr. Gehlot. The Chief Minister has made the Rajasthan government a hub of corruption by looting the State. The money is going to the coffers of Congress party," he said.

The senior BJP leader said the fight in Rajasthan was for power, in which Mr. Gehlot did not want to leave the Chief Minister's chair and Mr. Pilot wanted to occupy the chair. "Why are you two fighting with each other? It is the BJP which is going to form the government in this year's Assembly election," Mr. Shah said.

"It is a 3-D government in Rajasthan. The three Ds stand for *dange* (riots), *durvyavhaar* (abuse) to women and Dalit atrocities... The people will vote out the Congress in the polls," Mr. Shah said, adding that the BJP would form the government with a two-thirds majority and also win all the Lok Sabha seats in the State next year.

The BJP would go to the polls in Rajasthan on the strength of the works of the Narendra Modi government and highlight the corruption of the Congress, the Union Home Minister said.

Mr. Shah's visit to Bharatpur in eastern Rajasthan is a part of the party's strategy to focus on the 'weak seats' in the Assembly election.

कर्मचारी राज्य बीमा निगम
EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION
(Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India)
Website: www.esic.nic.in / www.esic.in
ESIC Hospital Peenya, 55-1-11, Plot No.1, 5th Main Road (FTI Campus), Survey No. 11, Yeshwanthapur, Bengaluru-22
सं./No.492/A/12/13/Rectt/2014/Estt (Vol IV) दिनांक/Date: 08.04.2023
WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR THE YEAR 2023 FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SENIOR RESIDENT UNDER THREE YEAR RESIDENCY SCHEME (ON CONTRACT) ESIC HOSPITAL, PEENYA, BENGALURU.
Walk-in- Interview for engagement of Senior Resident under Three year Residency Scheme (on contract basis) will be held on **20.04.2023** at ESIC Hospital Peenya, Bengaluru.
The details of vacant posts will be published 05 days prior to the date of interview in our official web site www.esic.nic.in.
Sd/-
(Medical Superintendent)

सीएसआईआर-संरचनात्मक अभियांत्रिकी अनुसंधान केंद्र
CSIR-Structural Engineering Research Centre
सीएसआईआररोड CSIR Road, तरमणि Taramani, चेन्नै Chennai 600 113
अधिसूचना सं Notification No.SE-3/2023
परियोजना सहयोगी- I & II की परिनियुक्ति के लिए आवेदन पत्र आमंत्रित किया जाता है।
APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR ENGAGEMENT OF PROJECT ASSOCIATES-I&II
परियोजना सहयोगी-I & II की परिनियुक्ति के लिए वॉक-इन साक्षात्कार की तिथि /
DATE OF WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR PROJECT ASSOCIATES-I & II : 2ND MAY 2023 (TUESDAY)
विस्तृत अधिसूचना के लिए हमारे वेबसाइट www.serc.res.in के होम पेज में 'Recruitment' पर क्लिक करें । For detailed notification, please visit our website www.serc.res.in and click on 'Recruitment' from the home page.
प्रशासनिक अधिकारी Administrative Officer

INBRIEF

Court gives Choksi protection against removal from island

Mehul Choksi, the diamantaire who is wanted in India in connection with a ₹13,000-crore fraud, cannot be removed from Antigua and Barbuda, the country's High Court said on Friday as it gave the ruling in his favour. Mr. Choksi, in his civil lawsuit, had argued that there was an obligation on the part of the defendants, the Attorney General of Antigua and the Chief of Police, to carry out a thorough inquiry and that he had an arguable claim that he was subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the *Nature Isle News* reported. The order has prohibited the removal of Mr. Choksi from the island's territory without a High Court ruling. ANI

Monitoring amended SOP for counter-insurgency: Army

Nine months after the Supreme Court stayed further proceeding in a botched ambush that led to the death of 13 people in Mon district of Nagaland, the Indian Army said it is monitoring the implementation of the amended standard operating procedure for counter-insurgency operations in the northeast. The revised SOP was drawn up after the Army killed 13 coal miners near Oting on December 4, 2021, after mistaking them for extremists. " ...We analysed the mistakes in that operation and comprehensively reviewed the conduction of operation in those areas," the Eastern Command chief, Lieutenant General Rana Pratap Kalita, said.

11 dead in suspected hooch tragedy at Motihari in Bihar

At least 11 people have died in a suspected hooch tragedy at Motihari in East Champaran district of Bihar after consuming illicit liquor on Friday. The death toll may go up as more than 20 people are hospitalised in critical condition. The police have arrested 10 people. "It is a suspected case of hooch tragedy; however, we can only ascertain the exact reason after the forensic report. A special investigation team has been formed to catch those responsible," East Champaran Superintendent of Police Kantesh Kumar Mishra said. The district administration has also sent a medical team for a door-to-door survey to identify those facing health issues.

SC accepts lawyer's apology over 'Mr. Put Mine' episode

The Supreme Court has accepted the apology of a lawyer whose "unintentional mistake" led to his name being recorded in the court's order as "Mr. Put Mine, Advocate". The quirk in the court records was circulated on social media and the top court took *suo motu* cognisance of it. A Bench of Justices Krishna Murari and Sanjoy Karol in a hearing found that the lawyer had sent a WhatsApp message saying "put mine" to his clerk. "What he wanted to communicate was that his name be also recorded in the proceeding. Inadvertently, the message as received was forwarded...," the court noted in its order.

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	1	6	7	3	4	8	5	2
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6	5	8	4	1	7	9	2	3

Dalits, tribals in Rajasthan challenge Cong. as they push for more quota

Ahead of the coming polls, they have pitched for separate welfare measures, reservation for promotions in govt. jobs, filling up of pending vacancies, and a separate homeland for Bhil tribals; Dalit Mahapanchayat in Jaipur draws massive crowd

Mohammed Iqbal
JAIPUR

A Dalit Mahapanchayat held in Jaipur earlier this month called for increasing reservation from 16% to 17.8% for Scheduled Castes and from 12% to 13.5% for Scheduled Tribes. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Asserting themselves ahead of the Assembly election due this year, Dalits and tribal people in Rajasthan are batting for higher reservations in jobs and education, proportional to the rise in their population, and are also pitching for separate welfare measures. Their demands have thrown up a challenge for the State's ruling Congress, which is under pressure after the recent eruption of caste tensions in Bharatpur district.

The demands include reservations for promotions, filling of backlog vacancies and the withdrawal of cases registered during the 2018 Bharat Bandh organised by Dalit groups.

Dalit communities have complained that though there are 56 Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe members in the Assembly, only a few speak about the issues crucial to their communities.

'Expand quotas'

A massive Dalit Mahapanchayat held in Jaipur earlier this month called for increasing reservation from 16% to 17.8% for SCs and from 12% to 13.5% for STs. The event, organised by the Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Welfare Society, was supported by as many as 29 Dalit and tribal groups.

In addition to a dozen demands made to the Central government, the participants raised 26 demands for action from the State government.

Mahapanchayat convener B.L. Arya said the SC and ST leaders in the government were not raising the demands of their communities strongly enough. Besides, the bureaucrats were putting hurdles in the way of Dalits getting their full quota benefits, he alleged, adding that the politicians who made promises before elections invariably became silent after coming to power.

Jat Mahasabha convener Rajaram Meel, Congress MLA and former Director-General of Police Harish Meena, Ministers Govind Ram Meghwal, Mamta Bhupesh, Tikaram Julie and Bhajan Lal Jatav, and several former bureaucrats participated in the mahapanchayat.

Mr. Arya said that 322 cases had been registered against the members of SC and ST communities in the State during the April 2018 Bharat Bandh.

"The State government had promised that these cases will be withdrawn. It has not been done so far," he said.

The Congress government, which has recently formed 19 new districts in the State, also faces a challenge from the Bhil tribe in the southern parts of the State, among whom a movement has started for establishing a Bhil homeland comprising the tribal-dominated regions of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

Bhil voters enjoy influence in 16 of the 28 Assembly constituencies in the Udaipur division. If the demand for a separate homeland gains ground, it may affect the prospects of the mainstream parties in this year's Assembly election and also force the Bharatiya Tribal Party, which won two seats in 2018, to devise new strategies for the poll.

Caste tensions

The caste tensions, which erupted in Nadbai town of Bharatpur this week after a dispute between two groups over the installation of statues of Dr. Ambedkar and erstwhile Jat ruler Maharaja Surajmal, has also thrown up a challenge for the State government.

The Jat community wants to install Surajmal's statue at the main roundabout, Belara Chauraha.

The villagers hurled stones at the police personnel and blocked a State Highway, but the situation was subsequently brought under control. The State government expects to resolve the dispute with the intervention of Tourism Minister Vishvendra Singh, who represents the Deeg-Kumher Assembly constituency.

Constitution Bench formed in same-sex marriage case

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Saturday announced the formation of a new Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud to hear a series of petitions seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriages.

The Associate Judges on the Bench are Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, S. Ravindra Bhat, Hima Kohli and P.S. Narasimha.

The presence of Justice Kaul, the senior-most judge after the Chief Justice, provides an additional gravitas. It is not often that the second senior-most judge joins a Constitution Bench as an Associate Judge. The hearing will begin from April 18 and is expected to be streamed live.

In the previous hearing, the Chief Justice had taken care to soothe the government's anxiety about how same-sex unions may "affect" the Indian "social ethos".

The Centre expressed worry about the "psychological impact" such a relationship would have on children.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the government, flagged that by taking on this case the court would be "shouldering a very heavy burden of how society will develop henceforth".

'NCERT met 25 experts and 16 CBSE teachers for syllabus rationalisation'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Stand the ground: The Education Ministry said the NCERT consulted five and two external experts respectively for the deletions in history and political science textbooks. FILE PHOTO

The NCERT consulted 25 external experts and 16 CBSE teachers to carry out its syllabus rationalisation exercise as part of which portions on the Mughals, Mahatma Gandhi and his assassin Nathuram Godse, reference to Hindu extremists, the 2002 Gujarat riots and Maulana Azad and others were dropped from school textbooks, according to the Education Ministry.

Dropping several topics and portions from the NCERT textbooks has triggered a controversy with the Opposition blaming the Centre of "whitewashing with vengeance".

At the heart of the row is the fact that while the changes made as part of the rationalisation exercise were notified, some of these controversial deletions were not mentioned in them. This has led to allegations about a bid to delete these portions surreptitiously. The NCERT has described the omissions as a possible oversight but refused to undo the deletions, saying they were based on the recommendations of experts.

It has also said the textbooks are anyway headed for revision in 2024 when the National Curriculum Framework kicks in.

Ministry's response

"Aside from NCERT in-house experts, NCERT sought the expertise of subject experts from Universities/Organisations and practising teachers in all its activities related to Research, Development, Training and Extension for wider consultation," the Ministry said in response to a written question in Lok Sabha.

Among the most contested deletions are from history and political science textbooks for which the NCERT consulted five and two external experts, respectively. "One round of consultation each was held with the experts," the Ministry had said in its response. For history, the five experts consulted are Umesh Kadam, Professor of History at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and member secretary at the Indian Council for Historical Research, Archana Verma, Associate Professor at Hind College; Delhi Public School (R.K. Puram) teacher Shruti Mishra, and two Delhi-based Kendriya Vidyalaya teachers Krishna Ranjan and Sunil Kumar.

For political science, the NCERT held two rounds with four experts.

Soon, e-commerce platform for selling handwoven saris

A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

After getting favourable support for "My Handloom, My Pride," and "My Sari, My Pride" campaigns, the Union Textiles Ministry has decided to launch an e-commerce platform that would help weavers and artisans sell their products, directly to consumers.

The Ministry also plans to hold "My Sari, My Pride" exhibitions at all the district centres and small cities of the country.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Union Textiles Secretary Rachna Shah said though it was early to see the impact of "My sari, My pride" campaign, the exhibition was curated by the National Institute of Fashion Technology in Delhi.

"My Handloom, My Pride was a campaign we have been doing for some time. We have a rich tradition of handwoven saris and about 120 types of the same. We showcased 75 such saris in an exhibition held in Delhi and it generated a buzz among people... We are planning to do this by curating similar exhibitions across the country," Ms. Shah said.

She added that the Ministry was looking at launching an e-commerce platform to enable weavers and artisans to directly sell their products. "I am hoping that very shortly, it will be launched. A soft launch of the pilot version will be done soon," she said.

She added that handloom and handicraft sectors required adequate exposure in terms of marketing, raw materials and product design support.

Rahul gets court relief in defamation case in Thane

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

A court in Thane district of Maharashtra on Saturday granted permanent exemption to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from appearing before it in a defamation case filed against him in 2014 by a Rashtriya Sawyamsevak Sangh (RSS) functionary.

Rajesh Kunte, a local RSS worker, had filed a complaint before the Bhiwandi Magistrate court following a speech given by the Congress leader in which he had allegedly accused the RSS of being responsible for Mahatma Gandhi's assassination.

PM's meditation cave in Kedarnath pulls tourists after pandemic lull

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Rudra meditation cave near Kedarnath. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A little over a kilometre's trek from Kedarnath, the Rudra meditation cave, about 3,500 metres above sea level, is booked out for April.

It has a 75% booking for May and 65% for June, during the Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand, set to start from April 22.

The caves shot to fame after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spent 17 hours in it during his visit to Uttarakhand in 2019, on the final day of the Lok Sabha election.

The draw of the meditation caves or *kutirs*, as they appear, now three in all, is a window to the spectacular Kedarnath valley.

The meditation caves were booked 103 times in 2019, but only 36 times in 2020 due to the onset of COVID, while it had no takers during the yatra in 2021 as the stay was restricted due to the pandemic.

In 2022, 64 people placed bookings, said the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN – Rudraprayag and Pauri) regional manager Sudarshan Khatri.

The official of the GMVN – an enterprise of the Uttarakhand government with a vision to promote steady and sustained growth of the travel and tourism sector in the State – added that the concept of the meditation cave was the brainchild of the Prime Minister himself. He wished to see pilgrims meditating in solitude when they visited the shrine after its renovation post the 2013 cloudburst disaster, the official added.

The Rudra, where the Prime Minister had meditated, has a bed, a bell, a heater, a geyser, and a table with a lamp. The main cave is available for ₹3,000 a night, while the rest cost ₹1,500 plus GST.

CBI searches properties of Trinamool leaders

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has stepped up the investigation into the recruitment scam by conducting searches at multiple places in Kolkata and several districts in West Bengal over the past two days.

On Saturday, the CBI conducted searches at six places in Kolkata as well as Purba Medinipur and Birbhum districts. Searches were held at the residence of Bibhas Chandra Adhikary, a former Trinamool block president and Gopal Dalapati, one of the accused, on Saturday.

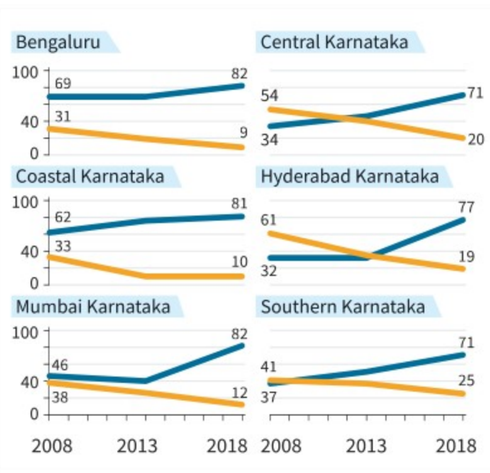
When just one vote made all the difference

The late R. Dhruvanarayan, a Congress leader who passed away recently at 61, holds a record for his one-vote victory. Dhruvanarayan, who was MLA for two terms and also a two-term MP, won in the 2004 Assembly election from the Santhemarahalli (SC) seat by a margin of just one vote. While A.R. Krishnamurthy garnered 40,751 votes, Mr. Dhruvanarayan emerged victorious with just one extra vote at 40,752. After his passing, the Congress has now announced giving the ticket to his son Darshan Dhruvanarayan (in photo) from the Nanjangud constituency in Mysuru district. The other recorded one-vote victory was during the Rajasthan Assembly election in 2008, where Congress chief C. P. Joshi lost the election by one vote against the BJP's Kalyan Singh Chouhan.

Darshan Dhruvanarayan

Bipolar contest

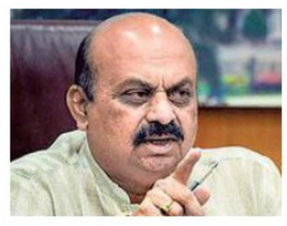
The 2018 Karnataka Assembly election was largely a bipolar contest which means that only two parties had effectively fought the election



The chart shows the region-wise share of seats involved in bipolar and triangular contests since 2008. In 2008, a majority of regions witnessed a triangular or a multiparty contest. But in 2018, all the regions witnessed a bipolar contest and the share of three-cornered fights declined

The highest margin in the 2018 election

In the 2018 election in Karnataka, Congress candidate Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy from the Pulakeshinagar constituency won by the highest margin of 81,626 votes against JD(S) candidate B. Prasanna Kumar, who polled only 15,948 votes. For the coming polls, the Congress is yet to announce its candidate.



Election means a wrestling bout, and the match will be good only if the opponent is good

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI
Chief Minister of Karnataka

'I feel people's pulse, and I am sure we will come to power'

The Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly says the current government is the most corrupt that the State has seen and there is a strong anti-incumbency factor against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. He says the campaign of the Congress will focus on addressing the problems of women, unemployed youth, farmers and the people's concern over the increase in prices

INTERVIEW

Siddaramaiah

Nagesh Prabhu

The Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly and former Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah, says the Congress will get a comfortable majority of 130-plus seats in the 224-strong Karnataka Assembly. The Janata Dal(S) will not cross 25 seats, while the BJP will get 60 to 65. Edited excerpts:

ILLUSTRATION: SEBASTIAN FRANCIS

What is the bigger motivation for you in this election? Is it to return as Chief Minister or is it just to see the Congress come back to power?

First, all my actions are aimed at bringing back the party to power. The BJP government is the most corrupt government, and in order to save democracy, I am working towards bringing back the Congress to power. And yes, I am also an aspirant to become the Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Why is the Congress floating the names of candidates for the Chief Minister's post so prematurely? KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar floated the name of AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge, while he too is an aspirant.

There is nothing wrong in anyone becoming an aspirant for the Chief Minister's post. The elected MLAs will elect a leader for the Congress Legislature Party and later, the high command takes a decision. This has been the democratic process followed so far in Karnataka.

In a significant move, the BJP has fielded Minister V. Somanna, a Lingayat, against you in Varuna. How will it affect you, especially in the matter of the Lingayat vote?

I am the target of both the BJP and the Janata Dal(S). The ruling BJP is afraid of me. That is why they have fielded a senior man against me. Mr. Somanna is not from the Varuna constituency in Mysuru. His native place is Kanakapura in Bengaluru rural district and his political activity has been in Bengaluru. They wanted me to be tied down to one constituency, but I am confident that the voters of Varuna will elect me. They have already made up their mind.

The Congress has been saying that it will get an absolute majority. What is the basis for your confidence?

There is a strong anti-incumbency trend against the BJP government, the most corrupt Karnataka has seen. The BJP leaders have been unable to address the real problems faced by the people; it has been a non-performing government. It has not fulfilled its promises made in 2018. Not even 10% of the promises were fulfilled. Therefore, the people are fed up. I can feel the pulse of the people, and I am sure that Congress will come to power.

Poll analysts say the JD(S) may well again be the king-maker and end up supporting the BJP. In case of a fractured mandate as in 2004 and 2018, will your party align again with the JD(S)?

According to my assessment, the JD(S) will not cross 25 seats, while the BJP will get 60 to 65. The Congress will get a comfortable majority of 130-plus seats. Congress will come to power... 100%.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is known to change the mood on the ground even in Assembly elections with his visits. The Uttarakhand election last year was an example. How do you view the PM's popularity among Karnataka voters?

I am not saying that he is an unpopular leader. But this is not a national election. The people of Karnataka vote in this election on State-related issues and not on national issues. Home Minister Amit Shah, PM Modi and BJP president J.P. Nadda have come to Karnataka several times. I don't think their tours will influence voters who have already decided to vote against the BJP government.

What will be the focus issues in the campaign for the next few days?

We have already announced four guarantees, though we have not yet released the poll manifesto. Our campaign will focus on addressing the problems of women, unemployed youth, farmers and price hike-related concerns. The real issues faced by the people in their daily life will be given priority.

Your party promised four "guarantees" for voters. What will it cost to implement these guarantees? Is it practical?

Yes, my party has already announced four "guarantees" for the welfare of the people. Annually, around ₹50,000 crore will be required to implement these. Karnataka is capable of meeting this expenditure. This year, the State Budget touched ₹3.1 lakh crore, and every year, the Budget size grows by ₹25,000 crore. So, by the end of the five-year term, the Budget size will be about ₹4.5 lakh crore. So, it is possible.

Why does Siddaramaiah have opponents both within and outside the Congress?

The former is not true.... but yes, the BJP and the JD (S) are targeting me only because I have been making allegations against them based on facts and figures and taking up real issues directly related to the people.

Will the Congress undo the recently increased reservation to dominant communities and scrapping of the 4% quota of Muslims?

The BJP government has increased the quota for the Veerashaiva-Lingayats from 5% to 7%, and for Vokkaligas from 4% to 6%. Without any basis or court rulings, it has scrapped the 4% reservation given to Muslims. We are not against increased reservation to any community. But they [BJP] should have amended the Constitution for increasing the quota beyond the 50% ceiling fixed by the Supreme Court. Now, the reservation all put together has increased to 56% in Karnataka. It has no constitutional validity unless it is included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. They wrote to the Centre recommending it only after we raised the issue. The BJP government has no political will to increase reservation.

It is just an eyewash. It should have done it in the proper manner as per the Constitution.

The Nandini versus Amul milk is an emotional issue, but will the stand of the Congress not create problems if Nandini wants to expand and sell in other States? Won't Nandini's entry to other States be opposed?

The Karnataka Milk Federation was formed to provide a market and protect the interests of our farmers. Why is Amul interfering in our market? We are telling the people not to demand Amul milk as our Nandini brand milk is a very good product. What will happen to our farmers if there is no market for their produce?

We are sending milk to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and other States because they want Nandini milk.

To watch the full interview, go to bit.ly/fullinterviewhere

Not a babel, it's a sonorous multilingual campaign

Candidates have been giving speeches and interacting with voters in up to five languages. Embracing linguistic diversity has become a necessity

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

Kannada *gottilla*! No problem! – this election, candidates in cosmopolitan Bengaluru are reaching out to voters in their mother tongues.

Campaigning at an apartment complex in the Yelahanka constituency, BJP MLA S.R. Vishwanath surprised many by giving his speech in halting Hindi, interspersed with bits of Kannada and English.

His diction and grammar may not have been perfect, but he appeared to strike a chord with the largely Hindi-speaking voters of the apartment complex.

"There are some who do not mind if we speak English, which came to us from a foreign country, but they are offended if we speak Hindi. However, now in most places, there are people who speak many languages. Hence, I will deliver my speeches in all three languages," Mr. Vishwanath said.

He also brought in a casual connection between his Hindi speech and his hope of finding a spot in the Union Cabinet. "I have been learning and speaking Hindi these days. Maybe I will soon go to Delhi, who knows!" he said. Despite debates about linguistic pride, campaigners across parties are embracing the diversity of Bengaluru. Most of them have been delivering speeches or interacting with voters in up to five languages.

"I enjoy campaigning in various languages as I believe in the inclusive and diverse culture of society. Of course, we want all residents to learn Kannada, but I also equally respect people who speak other languages," said Krishna Byre Gowda, Congress MLA for Byatarayanapura.

He said that being flexible also helped in reaching out to a wider section of voters.

"About 75% of my campaigning happens in Kannada and I sometimes switch to English. I also speak Hindi, or Hindi-mixed Urdu sometimes in Muslim pockets," Mr. Gowda said, emphasising that Kannada was still his mainstay.

In the Chickpet constituency, there are pockets of Kannada, Urdu, Marwari and Hindi speakers, and others. Here BJP leader and sitting MLA Uday Garudachar has been following the "horses for courses approach" when it comes to languages. "It is easy for me to speak in Kannada, English, Hindi and Tamil. We also send out groups of people who are fluent in these languages for campaigning," Mr. Garudachar said. He said greetings in campaign speeches are often modified to match the linguistic spread in a particular pocket of the constituency.

Sweet success or sting in the tale? Caste beehive disturbed this electoral season

Sharat S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

BJP's reservation experiments

- Scrapped 4% reservation to Muslims. Muslims have been moved to the 10% economically weaker section quota
- The 4% has been divided equally among Vokkaligas/ other castes and Veerashaiva-Lingayats/ other castes
- Increased the reservation matrix for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to 17% and 7%, respectively, based on their population, up from 15% and 3%
- Recommended internal reservation among the 101 Scheduled Castes by apportioning 6% to four broad SC (Left) castes; 5.5% to five broad SC (Right) castes; 4.5% to four touchable castes; 1% to 88 other communities

Towards the end of its tenure, the ruling BJP, under attack for allegations of corruption and bad governance, tinkered with the reservation matrix that previous governments had carefully steered clear of. In a State where political narratives are strongly driven by caste pressures, this has complicated the picture as Karnataka goes to the polls on May 10.

While there have been sporadic protests against the change in quotas, the Opposition Congress and the Janata Dal(S) have announced scrapping of the new OBC reservation matrix, but have also been guarded since big caste groups are involved.

The politically powerful castes have always had influence on government formation in Karnataka. If the first independent BJP government in South India came to power riding on a perceived Lingayat sympathy wave in 2008, after Janata Dal(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy did not effectively hand over power to B.S. Yediyurappa as per the 20-20 agreement, the division of Lingayat votes between BJP and the Mr. Yediyurappa-led Karnataka Janata Paksha (KJP) helped form a Congress government under Siddaramaiah in 2013. Later, a perceived anti-Siddaramaiah sentiment among Lingayats (largely owing to his support for the separate Lingayat reservation movement), coupled with antipathy among Vokkaligas, is believed to have been factors in his defeat in 2018.

In the 2023 election, however, more caste dimensions have come to play with the government's decision. Under pressure from caste groups and keeping an eye on the election, the BJP government increased the reservation quota for SC/STs, recommended internal quota among SCs and increased quota for categories where Lingayats and Vokkaligas are grouped in the OBC.

No Central nod

While the BJP hopes to cash in on the goodwill of the SC/ST community over the increased reservation, the Congress has pointed out that the hiked quota as well as internal reservation are yet to be approved by the Centre. Though the BJP hoped to address the concerns of SC (Left), Banjaras and others who are believed to back the saffron party, the community leaders have been sceptical of the decision. In Karnataka, the Dalit votes are believed to be divided with the SC (Left) backing the BJP and the SC (Right) the Congress. The STs are believed to be backing the BJP. It is believed Lingayats in north and central Karnataka back the BJP, while the Vokkaligas in Old Mysuru region back the JD(S).

The BJP government has scrapped the 4% reservation for Muslims, providing the saffron party a polarising optics among its Hindutva electorate, and divided it among Vokkaligas and Veerashaiva-Lingayats. In doing so, it attempted to appease the Panchamasalis, a numerically strong subsect of Veerashaiva-Lingayat that has been demanding 2A category status in the Backward Classes. Despite the Panchamasalis' demands not being fully met, the BJP has gone on an overdrive stating that the reservation to Muslims, whom it does not account as its voter base, has been equally divided among the two powerful land-owning communities. All these changes brought in without empirical data available in public domain have now been questioned in the Supreme Court.

Though the Congress and the JD(S) term the changes in the caste matrix to be more cosmetic and prone to judicial challenge, leaders also concede that confusion reigns at the grassroots, with some not aware of developments or having no clarity of the consequences. Going into the election, the Congress and the JD(S) have been clear in their opposition to scrapping of Muslim reservation. The Congress has spoken of breaching the 50% ceiling to accommodate all communities.

In this churn, the Congress is trying to reap the political harvest riding on the discontentment among the Panchamasalis who have traditionally supported the BJP. The ignominious exit of Lingayat strongman Yediyurappa as Chief Minister is also in focus, as the community is repeatedly reminded of the "disgraceful" act.

The BJP seems to be as of now on the back foot in the Vokkaliga narrative where the reservation issue is yet to resonate among the masses. There is no indication yet that the traditional voter base that supports the JD(S) and the Congress could shift significantly to the saffron party.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has thus ventured to shake a beehive in changing the reservation matrix. Only the poll outcome will reveal whether he got stung or extracted honey.

EC organises hackathon to identify loopholes in poll process

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Election Commission is organising a 30-hour offline hackathon, Electhon 2023, to address critical issues in the electoral process, specifically the registration of new voters and enhancing the participation of urban and young voters in the election. The event began at 9 a.m. on Saturday at the International Institute of Information Technology in Bengaluru. It will end at 4 p.m. on Sunday

The hackathon is a platform for individuals to engage in dialogue, exchange ideas and collaborate to elevate the electoral process in India. It also aims to encourage the development of innovative and creative solutions to challenges, using technology and the skills of the participants.

The hackathon received an overwhelming response, with the participation of 2,936 teams and 4,399 individuals. A total of 493 ideas were submitted, which were evaluated on several parameters. As many as 67 teams were shortlisted. From these, the top 40 teams were shortlisted for the offline hackathon. The evaluations would be based on ideation (40%), impact (10%), technical aptness (25%) and feasibility assessment (25%).

HANOI

U.S. and Vietnam pledge to boost ties during Blinken's visit to Hanoi

REUTERS

The U.S. and Vietnam said they hoped to upgrade diplomatic ties, days after a flare-up in tensions with China over Taiwan. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, passing through Hanoi on his way to a G7 meeting in Japan, met Vietnamese leaders to pave the way for a diplomatic upgrade to a "strategic partnership". AFP

DHAKA

Massive fire at pre-dawn engulfs shopping centre in Bangladesh

AFP

A massive pre-dawn fire gutted thousands of shops at a shopping centre in Dhaka, forcing the fire service to seek the help of the military, paramilitary as well as police to extinguish the blaze, the second such incident in Dhaka this month. There were no reports of deaths in the tragedy as the fire erupted before shops opened. PTI

SLOVIANSK

Russian strike kills 11, including a toddler, in eastern Ukraine

AFP

Russia shelled a block of flats in Sloviansk, killing 11, including a two-year-old boy who was rescued from the rubble but died on his way to hospital. Friday's strike came as Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a Bill that makes it easier to mobilise citizens into the Army and block them from fleeing the country if drafted. AFP

BEIJING

Lula wraps up China visit, says U.S. should not encourage Ukraine war

AFP

Brazil's President said on Saturday that the U.S. should stop "encouraging war" in Ukraine, as he wrapped a state visit to China in which he has strengthened economic ties with his country's main trading partner. Subsequently, he arrived in the UAE and is expected to meet President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. AFP

Indians in Sudan asked to stay indoors

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Embassy of India in Sudan has urged all Indian nationals to stay indoors in view of the clashes that have broken out in the country between the military and the paramilitary forces.

"All Indians are advised to take utmost precautions, stay indoors, and stop venturing outside with immediate effect. Please also stay calm and wait for updates," a message put out by the Embassy of India in Khartoum has said. A source on the ground has informed that the Indian mission has created a Whatsapp group for organising necessary help and at least 35 Indians are staying in Hotel Kanon in Khartoum.

Three dead as paramilitary and Army clash in Sudan

Paramilitaries say they are in control of the presidential place as well as Khartoum airport; Army denies claim, says it has launched airstrikes; civilian leaders call for an immediate ceasefire

Agence France-Presse
KHARTOUM

Three civilians died on Saturday in battles between Sudanese paramilitaries and the regular Army, which said it launched air strikes against them, sparking global calls for calm in a country which has seen decades of unrest.

The paramilitaries said they were in control of the presidential place as well as Khartoum airport, claims denied by the Army, as civilian leaders called for an immediate ceasefire to prevent Sudan's "total collapse".

The doctors' union reported the three civilian deaths, including at Khartoum airport and in North Kordofan State. At least nine others were wounded, the medics said.

Chaos erupts: Heavy smoke bellows above buildings near the Khartoum airport on Saturday amid clashes in Sudan. AFP

Violence erupted after weeks of deepening tensions between military leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy, paramilitary commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, over the planned integration of Daglo's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) into the regular Army.

The integration was a key element of talks to finalise a deal that would return the country to civilian rule and end the political and economic crisis sparked by their 2021 coup.

Created in 2013, the RSF emerged from the Janjaweed militia that then-president Omar al-Bashir unleashed against non-Arab ethnic minorities in the western Darfur region a decade earlier, drawing accusations of war crimes.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he was "deeply concerned" and urged both sides to "stop the violence immediately".

Explosive thrown at Japan PM during campaign event

Associated Press
WAKAYAMA

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was evacuated unharmed on Saturday after someone threw an explosive device in his direction while he was campaigning at a fishing port in western Japan, officials said. The police wrestled a suspect to the ground as screaming bystanders scrambled to get away and smoke filled the air.

Although no one was hurt, and Mr. Kishida continued campaigning on Saturday, the chaotic scene was reminiscent of the assassination nine months ago of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, which also came on a campaign tour and continues to reverberate in Japanese politics. Mr. Kishida was visiting Saikazaki port in Wakayama prefecture to support his ruling party's candidate in a local election, and the explosion occurred just before he was to begin his speech.

Close call: Fumio Kishida, left, surrounded by security police, arrives at the Saikazaki port in Wakayama on Saturday. AP

A young man believed to be a suspect was arrested on Saturday at the scene after he allegedly threw "the suspicious object," an official said. The official refused to comment on the suspect's motive and background, saying the police are still investigating.

It wasn't immediately clear what the explosive device was or how many the suspect had, but some reports said it was a smoke or pipe bomb, possibly with a delayed fuse. No injuries were reported in the incident, which came on the eve of a major international forum in Japan.

TPA's Mano Ganesan moots Tamil caucus in Sri Lankan Parliament

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

In a bid to ensure Sri Lanka's main political parties do not "take numerical minorities for granted" any more, Opposition MP Mano Ganesan has recently mooted setting up a "Tamil caucus" in Parliament.

The "caucus", he said, would allow Tamil legislators to express the "collective desire" of the island's Tamil speaking peoples. Although Sri Lanka's Tamils in the north and east, the Malaiyaha Tamils living across Central, Uva, Southern and Western Provinces, and the Tamil-speaking Muslims, may have different aspirations and political aims, their shared desire to live "within an undivided Sri Lanka, sharing wealth and power as combined stake holders of national sovereignty" must be collectively articulated, the leader of the Tamil Progressive Alliance (TPA) said.

"It [the caucus] will help us commence a collective dialogue with all the national political parties, and beyond politicians, reach out to the Sinhala community leaders and organisations; as well as the international community and development partners,

Mano Ganesan

and urge them to use their good offices to ensure Sri Lanka stands by its international commitments," Mr. Ganesan told *The Hindu* at his Colombo residence.

Currently part of the main Opposition alliance led by the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB or United People's Force), the TPA, representing Malaiyaha Tamils, was among the few political groups to retain all of its six parliamentary seats in the last general election. Mr. Ganesan's recent outreach comes amid speculation over national elections next year. Sri Lanka's twice-postponed – owing to "lack of funds" – local government elections may not be held anytime soon, despite the country's Supreme Court restraining authorities from withholding funds, but all signs point to a presidential poll early next year, according to the legislator.

"I met President Ranil Wickremesinghe one-on-one recently. He told me that he would run [for President]," said Mr. Ganesan, who was a Cabinet minister in the former Sirisena-Wickremesinghe administration.

'Common candidate'

Six-time Prime Minister Mr. Wickremesinghe was elected President through an urgent parliamentary vote in July 2022, after Gotabaya Rajapaksa was unceremoniously ousted by a people's uprising at the height of Sri Lanka's crisis.

The country's Constitution bars a President elected by Parliament when the office falls vacant as it did last year, from calling for early elections. Such a move would require a constitutional amendment, and possibly a referendum.

"It appears that Mr. Wickremesinghe hopes to be the common candidate in an entity that brings young members of both the SLPP [Rajapaksas' ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna or People's Front], and the SJB, along with the minority parties together," the MP said, adding that the TPA would engage with all parties and decide closer to the elections.

"We will fit in with any government," he said, if it is receptive to the Malaiyaha Tamils' demands.

Sri Lanka is marking the 200th year since the British brought down indentured labourers from south India to work in the island's plantations. The British government has a "moral responsibility" towards the community who developed the profitable tea export industry, the island's motor and railroad network, and the Colombo port in then Ceylon, he stressed. "I have started a dialogue with the British establishment on this recently."

The responsibility of Indian state "is equal or even more". "Our people were subjected to arbitrary and involuntary repatriation to India, notably by the Sirimavo-Shastri pact (1964) ...We were not consulted, but treated like cattle," he said. "Indians thought keeping Colombo happy served its national interests. This greatly diminished the political status and socio-economic well-being of our community. If not for this repatriation pact, the current strength of our MPs in Parliament of Sri Lanka, which is nine today, would have reached not less than 25."

Macron signs France pension law despite protests

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron signed his controversial pension reform into law on Saturday, prompting accusations from unions and the left he was showing "contempt" towards those behind a three-month protest movement.

The alterations became law after the text was published before dawn in France's official journal, with the Opposition claiming that Mr. Macron had moved to smuggle it through in the depth of the night.

The publication came just hours after the approval on Friday by the Constitutional Council of the essence of the legislation, including the headline change of raising the retirement age from 62 to 64.

The standoff has become the biggest challenge of the second mandate of Mr. Macron, who will now address France on the crisis on Monday evening.

Antiviral-resistant H1N1 spreads from wild ducks to chickens

The Hindu Bureau

When the influenza burden is high during certain years, the amount of antiviral oseltamivir used will be high. Much of it enters the water system and will end up driving antiviral resistance in avian viruses. Previous work has demonstrated that influenza virus can develop resistance to oseltamivir carboxylate (OC) when the virus infects wild ducks that are exposed to environmental-like OC concentrations suggesting that environmental resistance is a concern.

Avian influenza strain H1N1 with the OC resistance mutation (NA-H274Y) has been found to retain resistance even when the environment did not contain oseltamivir carboxylate, suggesting maintained fitness of the virus. If wild birds, wild ducks in particular, are the first to be infected by influenza virus brought in by migratory birds, domestic poultry act as an important amplifying host, and a source of influenza virus evolution. The virus that has evolved can then spread from poultry birds to humans.

A study recently published in the *Journal of General Virology* has demonstrated that oseltamivir-resistant strain can transmit from wild ducks to chickens and then spread between chickens, while retaining the resistance mutation in an experimental setting mimicking conditions suitable for natural transmission.

"Our results demonstrate that regardless of the oseltamivir-resistance mutation, infection was detected in experimentally-infected chickens and chickens in contact with infected mallards," the authors write. However, none of the virus strains established sustained transmission in chickens.

According to the authors, this may be due to poor species adaptation of the virus. "We demonstrated limited interspecies transmission, with no difference between wild-type and resistant virus," they write. However, neither oseltamivir-resistant strain nor the wild type was able to establish a sustained transmission in chickens in the two different experiments.

They found that mutation (NA-H274Y) that renders the virus resistant to oseltamivir carboxylate can remain stable in an environment even when oseltamivir carboxylate was not present. And there is no barrier to interspecies transmission of the antiviral-resistant virus *per se*, thus demonstrating a risk of an oseltamivir-resistant pandemic virus.

The study turns the spotlight on responsible use of oseltamivir and surveillance for resistance development to limit the risk of an oseltamivir-resistant pandemic strain.

Omicron variants evolve strategies to evade T cell immunity

The cellular mechanisms and consequences of enhanced MHC I inhibition by Omicron variants on infection and disease remain to be determined

R. Prasad

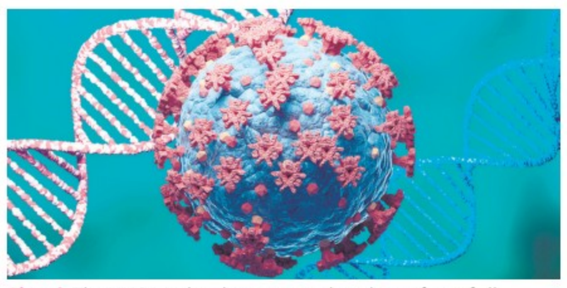
Much like many other viruses that have developed strategies to evade T cell-mediated clearance by humans, SARS-CoV-2 virus too has the ability to evade the CD8 T cells. While neutralising antibodies are responsible for preventing infection, CD8 T cells play a huge role in reducing the viral load and clearing the infection by detecting and killing infected cells. The CD8 T cells cannot prevent infection.

A study recently published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS) found that the SARS-CoV-2 virus encodes multiple viral factors that modulate major histocompatibility complex class I (MHC I) expression in the host cells. The MHC I plays an important role in alerting the immune system to virally infected cells. The MHC I molecules are expressed on the surface of all infected cells.

Omicron variants can survive better in a human host

The ancestral strain was already equipped to escape from T cell-mediated immunity by reducing the MHC-I expression by infected cells

- Neutralising antibodies help prevent infection, while T cells reduce the viral load and clear the infection by detecting and killing infected cells
- When a virus infects a cell, the immune system attaches a part of the virus (antigen) to MHC I molecules, thus presenting the antigen on the outside of the infected cell
- One of the common tricks that viruses use to avoid killing is to inhibit MHC I expression and presentation. SARS-CoV-2 is no exception
- The ancestral strain and a few other SARS-CoV-2 variants had the ability to escape from T cell-mediated immunity by reducing the expression of MHC I



Signal: The MHC I molecules expressed on the surface of all infected cells play an important role in alerting the immune system

- Some of the Omicron subvariants have greater capacity to suppress MHC I levels compared with the ancestral strain and other variants
- Immune evasion from CD8 T cells could allow the virus survive better in the infected cells
- To what extent the reduction of MHC I expression impairs the recognition of infected cells by T cells is not known
- Consequences of enhanced MHC I inhibition by Omicron variants on disease is unknown

MHC I molecules

"When a virus infects a cell, one of the ways in which the immune system responds is by attaching short sequences of proteins from the virus (antigen) to MHC I molecules, thus presenting the antigen on the outside of the cell. Killer T-cells look for antigens inside MHC I and if they find any that match the specific thing they are programmed to kill, they go ahead and kill it." One of the common tricks that viruses use to avoid killing is to inhibit MHC I expression and presentation. SARS-CoV-2 is no exception. The SARS-CoV-2 virus has evolved multiple strategies to inhibit MHC I expression, which is not seen in the case of the influenza virus. The suppression of MHC I is specifically seen in the infected cells and varies between different viral strains.

"Our data showed that MHC I suppression is mediated by a number of viral gene products and affects only the infected cells. Such a mechanism will not lead to generalised immunodeficiency but reflects a specific survival mechanism for SARS-CoV-2," Dr. Akiko Iwasaki, Yale University immunologist and the corresponding author of the paper, tweeted.

"What does this mean? Immune evasion from CD8 T cells could allow the virus in infected cells to survive better in the host. The virus could establish a safe niche for prolonged replication. To eliminate such persistent reservoirs, we need to employ antivirals or antibody therapy," she said in another tweet.

'Superior capacity'

The ancestral strain first found in Wuhan, China and a few other variants that came up later already had the ability to escape from T cell-mediated immunity by reducing the expression of MHC I. But the authors found that the Omicron subvariants (BA.1, BA.2.12.1, XAF, and BA.4) had a "superior capacity" to suppress MHC I levels on the surface of the cells infected by the virus compared with the ancestral strain and other variants. Besides being endowed with greater ability to evade neutralising antibodies, the Omicron subvariants are better at evading recognition by the killer T cells.

Looking for the molecular mechanism of the enhanced MHC I inhibition by Omicron subvariants, the team, led by Dr. Iwasaki, identified common mutations in the E protein (T9I) which are shared among all Omicron subvariants used in the study.

"We found that T9I mutation within the E protein significantly enhanced the degree of MHC I downregulation. The results underscore the universal capacity of all SARS-CoV-2 strains to mediate the cell-intrinsic reduction of MHC I expression within the infected cells, and highlight the superior ability of the Omicron subvariants in acquiring MHC I evasion capacity," they write.

Mice infected with SARS-CoV-2 (MA10) showed that MHC I elevation was completely shut down in the infected lung epithelial cells unlike the lung epithelial cells infected with influenza virus. "So, here we found an intrinsically potent ability of SARS-CoV-2 to shut down the host MHC-I system," Dr. Iwasaki tweeted.

Evasion strategy

"We demonstrated that the ability to reduce MHC I expression remained unchanged throughout the pre-Omicron variant-of-concern evolution. These findings suggested three important perspectives on the MHC I evasion strategy of SARS-CoV-2," they write.

First, the virus utilises multiple redundant strategies to suppress MHC-I expression. Second, MHC I downregulation may not only impair cytotoxic T lymphocytes (CTL) recognition of infected cells for killing but may also impair priming of T cells.

"Our study provided evidence of inhibition of MHC I upregulation in SARS-CoV-2-infected cells in both in vitro and in vivo settings," they note.

"The cellular mechanisms and consequences of enhanced MHC I inhibition by Omicron variants on infection and disease remain to be determined," they write.

Magnetoresistance: one more thing graphene does differently

Vasudevan Mukunth

Researchers in the U.K., led by Nobel laureate Andre Geim, have discovered another property of graphene – a single-atom-thick layer of carbon atoms bonded in a honeycomb pattern – that further distinguishes this 'wonder' material.

Dr. Geim and his colleagues found that graphene displays an anomalous giant magnetoresistance (GMR) at room temperature. GMR is the result of the electrical resistance of a conductor being affected by magnetic fields in adjacent materials. It is used in hard disk drives and magnetoresistive RAM in computers, biosensors, automotive sensors, and medical imagers.

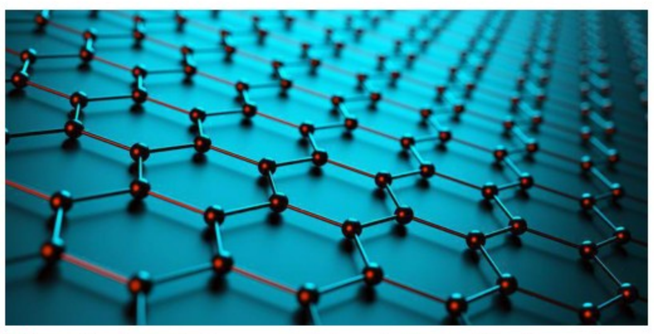
Graphene-based device

GMR-based devices are particularly used to sense magnetic fields. The new study has found that a graphene-based device, unlike conventional counterparts, would not need to be cooled to a very low temperature to sense these fields. The findings were published in *Nature* on April 12.

A conductor is sandwiched between two ferromagnetic materials (metals attracted to magnets, such as iron). When the materials are magnetised in the same direction, the electrical resistance in the conductor is low. When the directions are opposite to each other, the resistance increases. This is known as GMR.

The magnetoresistance observed in the graphene-based device was "almost 100-times higher than that observed in other known semimetals in this magnetic field range", Alexey Berdyugin, assistant professor of physics at the National University of Singapore and the co-author of the paper, told *The Hindu* by an email.

The effect is due to the way electrons in the conductor scatter off electrons in the ferromagnets, depending on the orientation of the latter's spin which is affected by the direction of the magnetic field.



Unique: Graphene displays an anomalous giant magnetoresistance at room temperature. GETTY IMAGES

Conventional GMR devices are cooled to low temperatures to suppress the kinetic energy of their constituent particles, keeping them from deflecting the electrons moving past them. In graphene, the researchers found this suppression unnecessary.

Neutral plasma

In their study, the magnetoresistance in monolayer graphene at 27° Celsius held between two layers of boron nitride increased by 110% under a field of 0.1 tesla. To compare, the magnetoresistance in these conditions increases by less than 1% in normal metals. The team attributed this to the presence of a 'neutral' plasma and the electrons' mobility.

Plasma is usually a gas of charged particles. But in the experiment, the "plasma consists of equal numbers of thermally excited electrons and holes," Dr. Berdyugin said.

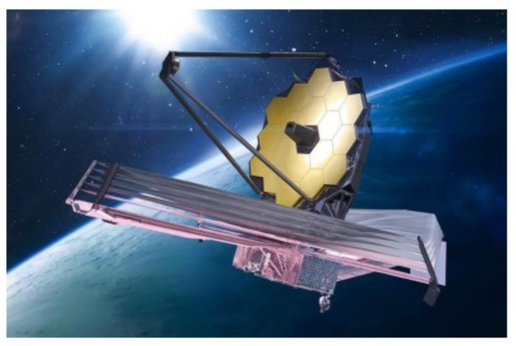
A 'hole' is a site where an electron is supposed to be but isn't, thus behaving as if it is positively charged. The researchers had 'tuned' the graphene to have as many electrons as holes. "As a result, the total charge of this plasma is zero", which is desirable because it stifles an effect that comes in the way of GMR.

Second, the researchers used an "extremely clean" setup and graphene without "any defects". The electrons in the neutral plasma were not scattered by vibrations in the atomic lattice either. Together, the electrons in the material had "anomalously high" mobility at room temperature.

This said, a graphene-based GMR device cannot replace existing devices because the latter have other properties that the former does not. For example, as magnetic fields are applied and removed, the conductor's resistivity in the two types of devices evolves differently.

"Our device is more robust at high temperatures," Dr. Berdyugin said. "So it's possible that [it] will be used in novel applications that require magnetic-field sensing in extreme conditions."

SNAPSHOTS



JWST near-infrared imaging reveals a compact galaxy

New James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) imaging and spectroscopy observations have revealed a gravitationally-lensed galaxy at redshift 9.5 – corresponding to 510 million years after the Big Bang. The researchers report (*Science*) near-infrared imaging from the JWST of a distant galaxy magnified by gravitational lensing. They obtained spectral information with strong nebular emission lines that reveal some of the galaxy's physical properties. The galaxy has an abundance of oxygen and hydrogen.

New study challenges the canonical theory in East Africa

Challenging a long-standing paleoecological theory, two studies (*Science*) reveal that savannah grasses existed in East Africa over 10 million years earlier than previously thought, and describe how those grasses led to landscapes that drove skeletal adaptations in hominoids during the early Miocene. Savannahs and lowlands are usually home to C4 grasses. The new study pushes this date back to 21 million years ago. Their findings challenge the canonical theory that East Africa was mostly forest at this time.

Study shows factor protecting bears against thrombosis

A study (*Science*) that included hibernating brown bears – which rarely suffer from blood clots – has revealed a factor that appears to protect the animals against immobility-associated thrombosis. The analysis points to reduced expression of platelet protein HSP47 as protective. This suggests that HSP47-associated thromboprotection is conserved across several mammalian species and could be used to develop new antithrombotic drugs.

Question Corner

Viruses in DNA

Can viruses hide in the DNA of unicellular organisms?

Scientists at the University of Innsbruck have discovered over 30,000 viruses by using the high-performance computer cluster 'Leo' and sophisticated detective work (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*).

The viruses hide in the DNA of unicellular organisms. In some cases, up to 10% of microbial DNA consists of built-in viruses. Built into the genome of the microbes, they found the DNA of over 30,000 previously unknown viruses, says a release. This hidden DNA may allow the replication of complete and functional viruses in the host cell. These viruses do not appear to harm their hosts. On the contrary, some may even protect them. Many appear to be similar to so-called virophages. These viruses infect and destroy other harmful viruses that infect their host cell.

The DNA of the newly discovered viruses is similar to virophage DNA. Therefore, it is probable that the host microbes protect themselves from giant viruses through these built-in viruses.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

Straddling the spiritual and the political

The Dalai Lama

The spiritual leader who fled to India in 1959 is now seeking a non-violent resolution of the 'Tibetan question', modernising the political and temporal aspects of the organisation in exile and greater autonomy for Tibetans within the region

Srinivasan Ramani

The 14th Dalai Lama always seems to remain in the news, more so for any leader of any community in exile or for that matter, any spiritual leader. Most recently, his office apologised for making inappropriate remarks to a child on video. The child was visiting him with family in Dharamsala on February 28 and the office stated that the Dalai Lama's actions were "innocent" and "playful". Later, Penpa Tsering, the head of Tibet's "government-in-exile", claimed, without proof, that "pro-Chinese sources" were responsible for "viralling" the video.

The incident became a source of embarrassment for the 14th Dalai Lama, known to the Tibetan people as 'Gyalwa Rinpoche' and by the spiritual name Tenzin Gyatso. Born as Lhamo Thondup in 1935, he was identified as a reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1937 and formally enthroned as the 14th Dalai Lama in 1940. The institution of the 'Dalai Lama' has been held as the spiritual leader of the dominant Gelug or 'Yellow Hat' school of Tibetan Buddhism. Each Dalai Lama is held as the custodian of the teachings of Avalokiteshvara, a bodhisattva (person in the path of *bodhi* or a form of Buddhist enlightenment) and an important deity in Tibetan Buddhism. The 14th Dalai Lama was both the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet till 1959, when he and his retinue fled to India, following unrest in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, and have since stayed on as exiles.

Currently, the Dalai Lama remains the most revered religious and spiritual figure for Tibetan Buddhists, besides having established a global celebrity of sorts after regular lectures and dialogues with Western leaders and civil society members in particular. Politically, however, he gave up political/temporal powers in 2011 to make way for a democratic "government in exile", which now goes by the appellation, the Central Tibet Administration, but is seen as a non-profit political organisation and is not recognised as a sovereign government by any country.

The giving up of political powers marked a significant change. The tradition of the Dalai Lama leading the Tibetan government began with the fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, who in the early 17th century founded the "Gelugpa government", which heralded a feudal theocratic rule that lasted until the early 20th century. The government had the Dalai Lama at the top, followed by a Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister. The government had a dual religious and civil structure, percolating down in a largely feudal system that held till the early 20th century.

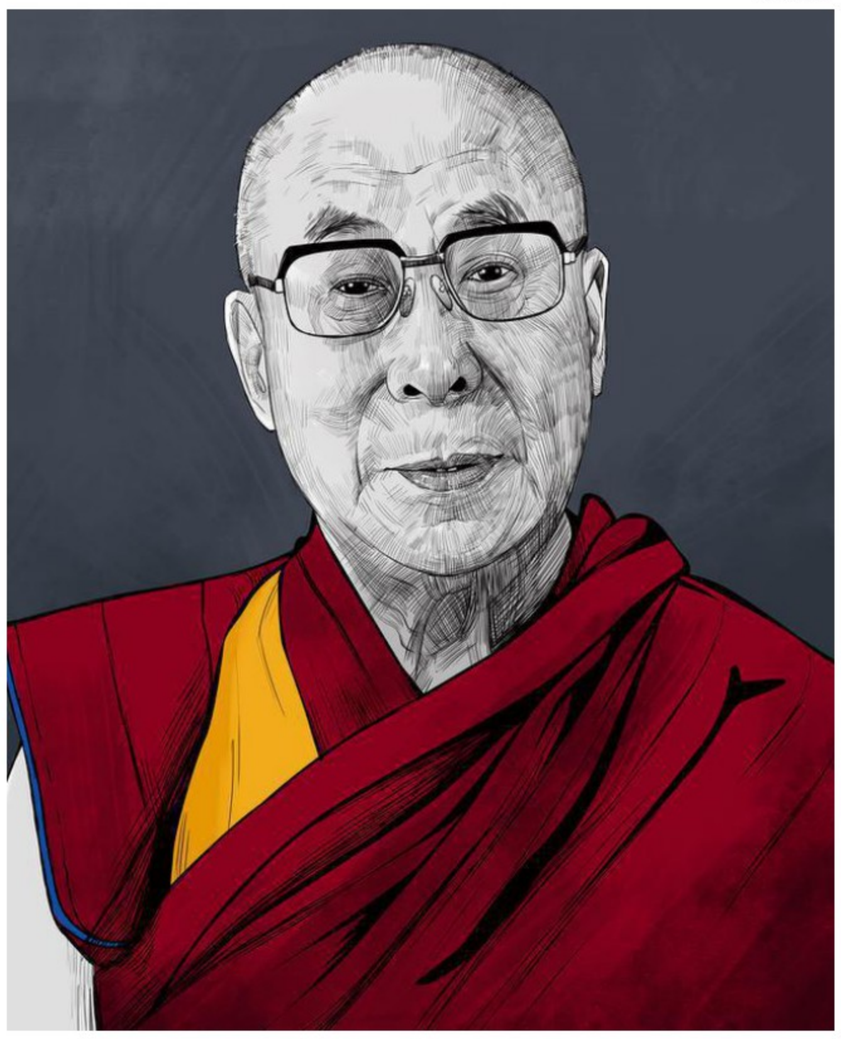
The current government in exile, however, is modelled on an elected parliamentary system with judicial, legislative and executive branches and is primarily attentive to the welfare of the 100,000-odd Tibetan exile community in India. Most of the exiles stem from those who fled Tibet in 1959, eight years after communist China took control over Tibet.

Claim of suzerainty

Communist China had always held a claim of suzerainty over Tibet, which included the assertion that Tibet had become a "protectorate" of Manchu-ruled China in the late 17th century, as some Western historians have described as the relation between Tibet and the Chinese imperial state then. Even though Tibet enjoyed a "de facto" independent period in the early 1900s at a time of turmoil in China, the republicans and the communists retained a claim over Tibet being part of China and once the communists came to power with Mao Zedong's leadership in 1949, the regime swiftly sought to secure the formal "reunification" of Tibet ruled by the Dalai Lama with China.

After Tibet refused to do so, the Chinese invaded Tibet's eastern province in October 1950 and secured a 17-point "Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" in 1951" that "granted Tibetan recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet for the first time in history", as anthropologist Melvyn Goldstein puts it. The lacunae in the implementation of the agreement besides the uneasy

R. RAJESH



coexistence of the communist regime and the theocratic Tibetan regime led to an uprising in Tibet, which also received covert support from the U.S. The uprising was put down and the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959, along with 80,000 Tibetans.

From initially advocating independence for Tibet, the Dalai Lama has come a long way to now seek a version of Tibetan autonomy within China. The first contact between the exiled Tibetans and the Chinese leadership occurred in 1979, when the Dalai Lama's elder brother visited Beijing to meet with Deng Xiaoping. Deng had then insisted that the basis for any discussion was that the Dalai Lama had to accept that Tibet was an integral part of China.

Forthcoming talks between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government – much of it held in secret – revealed the significant gap in their positions. The exiles sought to operate a political system in Tibet that was different from the communist regime, besides seeking greater autonomy and an expansion of the autonomous region into other provinces of western China where ethnic Tibetans reside. The negotiations collapsed due to the differences but the Dalai Lama sought to drum up international support through speeches as a political leader of the Tibetans – the most prominent of which was the Strasbourg speech in 1998 where he argued for "Greater Tibet" to be a self-governing democratic entity but enjoying a dominion status within the Chinese nation-state.

The Chinese government went on to refuse these demands, continuing to term the Dalai Lama a "splittist", by expressing wariness over the expansion of the autonomous region.

Persistent unrest

Following persistent unrest in Tibet in the late 1980s, Beijing went on to intensify its political control and repressive measures while embarking upon economic modernisation in line with the reforms that were underway in China, even as it continued to promote greater cultural rights for Tibetans. This resulted in an economic boom in the tourism and construction sectors in Tibet, enriching the rising middle class in the region, but also allowing for a non-Tibetan population to increase in the region to the benefit, in particular, of Han Chinese traders.

The Dalai Lama has since these developments sought to amplify his "middle way" – seeking a non-violent resolution of the 'Tibetan question', moderate and modernise the political and temporal aspects of the Tibetan organisation in exile and greater autonomy for Tibetans within Tibet.

He has, besides this, engaged in spiritual dialogue with the West in particular to promote the "universalising" values of Buddhism that include non-violence, the abolition of death penalty and religious harmony among others. This has earned him substantial popularity globally.

In recent years, the Dalai Lama has speculated on the reincarnation of his successor by even suggesting that the custom of recognising "reincarnate lamas may have had its day" because of its feudal origins and incongruence with democratic society. This has not deterred the Chinese government to begin preparing the process of selecting the next Dalai Lama, a tacit admission that despite several changes in Tibet and the relatively low number of protests against communist rule in recent years, the institution of the Dalai Lama continues to have a significant hold over Tibetans, both within and outside Tibet.

THE GIST

- The tradition of the Dalai Lama leading the Tibetan government began with the fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, who in the early 17th century founded the "Gelugpa government", a feudal theocratic rule
- The 14th Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 following unrest in Tibet, which was invaded by communist China, which always had suzerainty claims over the region, in October 1950
- From initially advocating independence for Tibet, the Dalai Lama has come a long way to now seeking a version of Tibetan autonomy within China

Echoes from the 'Troubles'

Good Friday Agreement

As Northern Ireland's power sharing government remains suspended, the U.S. is urging all sides to keep up the spirit of the 1998 deal that brought peace to the region

G. Sampath

U.S. President Joe Biden visited Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland last week to commemorate 25 years of the Good Friday Agreement. The visit comes at a time when Northern Ireland is without a government. Its power-sharing government – a product of the Good Friday Agreement – collapsed last year over opposition to the post-Brexit trade rules.

Signed in 1998, the peace deal ended more than three decades of conflict, known as the 'Troubles', in which more than 3,700 people were killed.

The discord, however, precedes even the 'Troubles', going back to centuries of animosity between the Protestants, who mostly came from Britain, and the Catholics, who wanted a 'unified' Ireland freed from British rule. The Irish War of Independence (1919-21), fought by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against British forces, led to the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which granted Ireland the status of a 'Free State', or what we know today as the Republic of Ireland. But the treaty also allowed the Protestant-majority northeast of the island to opt out of the Free State and remain a part of Britain.

While the Anglo-Irish Treaty ended the armed

AFP

independence struggle, it could not eliminate the tensions between the Catholic Nationalists and the Protestant Unionists. The Protestant majority, having captured the reins of power in Northern Ireland, discriminated against the minority Catholics. Disgruntled Catholics signed up for a splinter group of the old IRA that sought to wage an armed struggle against the British. In response, the Protestants formed the Ulster Volunteer Force, a paramilitary group. In the late 1960s, a brutal civil war broke out.

The 'Troubles' ceased with the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998. It had two parts: a 'multi-party agreement' between Northern Ireland's major parties, and an agreement between the governments of the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland. It laid down that Northern Ireland would remain a part of the U.K until a majority of its inhabitants wanted otherwise, and if that happens, then the U.K. would respect that choice.

Brexit woes

Northern Ireland began to prosper under the peace instituted by this deal, and then Brexit happened. With the Republic of Ireland a part of the EU market, Northern Ireland became the only part of the U.K. to have a land border with the EU. This went against the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement, which had guaranteed unfettered flow of goods and people on the island.

The U.K. and the EU then came up with the Northern Ireland Protocol, which shifted the trade border for inspection of the goods – to ensure that they are in compliance with EU rules – to Irish ports. But the Unionists, led by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), were opposed to any kind of border checks on goods flowing between Britain and Northern Ireland. Holding that it undermined the Good Friday Agreement by instituting a customs border between Britain and Northern Ireland, the DUP boycotted the power-sharing government last year, causing Northern Ireland to continue without a government, which essentially means being governed directly by Westminster.

Just ahead of the Biden visit, and possibly to have something to show the U.S. President, the UK and the EU signed the Windsor Framework, under which all the goods arriving on the island would be split into two different lanes: goods destined for Northern Ireland would go into the 'green lane', meaning they wouldn't need inspection, while those destined for Ireland/EU would go into the 'red lane', where they will undergo checks.

While the Nationalists have mostly responded favourably to this arrangement, the DUP is yet to make up its mind. The power-sharing government remains in suspension. It is in this context that Mr. Biden's visit assumes significance – the last thing the U.S. wants is armed strife and security concerns in the backyard of its closest ally.

World Bank's face of change

Ajay Banga

The former MasterCard CEO is set to become the next World Bank President, as the lender is pivoting its focus towards climate action and transforming its business model

Diksha Munjal

In an interview eight years ago with the Stanford Graduate School of Business, corporate veteran Ajay Banga, who was serving as the CEO of payment processing giant MasterCard at the time, spoke about one "tremendous" lesson from his 13-year career at Nestle. "You're one person, but one person can make a difference," he said. Almost a decade later, as he is being expected to become the next President of the World Bank, the focus is on how Mr. Banga, 63, is going to help the 77-year-old institution tackle its several challenges, including pivoting its focus toward climate action and transforming its lending model.

Even with his best intentions and the best people, Mr. Banga says, the "idea that somehow a magic wand has arrived" is flawed. The former CEO, who is U.S. President Joe Biden's sole nominee to lead the Bank, believes, nonetheless, that the multilateral lender can do a lot more and has ambitious plans to mobilise private sector money for its development projects.

Some observers believe Mr. Banga, who spent most of his career in the corporate world, may not be the right candidate to shake up the World Bank in a way it

needs. Notably, the institution's role in mitigating climate change is under most scrutiny right now as the current World Bank head, David Malpass, announced his resignation from the post earlier this year, more than a year before the end of his term, after a controversy over his refusal to comment on whether fossil fuels are contributing to global warming.

Some others, including the likes of Mr. Biden, and IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva, believe the corporate leader's background from a developing country and his work on financial inclusion and diversity at his previous stints make him a good fit for the job.

Born in the Khadki cantonment of Pune in 1959, Mr. Banga was inclined to a career in finance, receiving his bachelor's degree in Economics from Delhi's St. Stephen's college. He then got himself an MBA from the prestigious Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad. Right out of college, he joined Nestle as a management trainee in 1981 and spent the next 13 years at the company.

After a short stint at PepsiCo leading its franchise expansion in India, Mr. Banga moved to the CitiGroup, also spending 13 years there and heading the bank's business in the Asia-Pacific from Hong Kong. As he was on the decks to become CEO of the bank, he took up the role of President and Chief Operating Officer at MasterCard in 2009, moving to the U.S.

Financial inclusion

In his time at MasterCard, he became popular for being one of the best performing CEOs, as *Harvard Magazine* called him in 2013. Mr. Banga pioneered the concept of financial inclusion at MasterCard, by setting and achieving the goal to bring 500 million unbanked people into the formal banking system and digital economy by 2021. He currently serves as the Vice Chairman of General Atlantic, heading its climate-focused fund Beyondnetzero. He was also chosen by former U.S. President Barack Obama in 2015 to be a part of his Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

Mr. Banga has promised to bring inclusion as a central tool of his leadership, while mobilising the private sector to help the World Bank in its work. While observers worry about how he will manage the task of getting low income countries to work on climate projects while they face gaps in fundamental funding for infrastructure and health, the nominee has argued that the two issues are "intertwined".

"Inequality is intertwined completely with challenges like climate change, challenges like fragility of the world with refugees and the like being caused by conflict, with challenges like the pandemic, with challenges like with Russia and Ukraine, with what that does to food and fertiliser," Mr. Banga said in an interview. "I don't think you can segregate these into buckets and hope that you can deal with one without dealing with the other."

INBRIEF

Elanpro FY23 revenue up 74% at ₹220 cr. on better demand

Elanpro Group said it recorded 74% revenue growth to ₹220 crore during the last fiscal on better demand. Revenue had stood at ₹125.80 crore in the previous financial year. Elanpro offers refrigeration products to hotels, restaurants, cafes, supermarkets and pharma industries. Volumes sales stood at 72,000 units, it said in a statement. "We delivered record net sales of ₹220 crore amidst rocky market conditions," said Shashank Joshi, director. PTI

Paras Buildtech eyes ₹108 cr. from Gurugram project

Realty firm Paras Buildtech on Saturday said it is expecting ₹108 crore in revenue from its new commercial project in Gurugram. The company has unveiled a new project in which it will sell more than 40 plots for the development of SCOs (shops-cum-offices), according to a statement. The project titled 'Paras Arcade 114' is spread over 3.25 acres and has a saleable area of 4,597 sq. m. The commercial SCO plots range in sizes between 104 and 143 sq. ft. PTI

NFRA imposes ban, fine on four auditors in DHFL case

The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) has imposed a fine and a one-year ban on four auditors for alleged professional misconduct in connection with the audit of branches of Dewan Housing Finance Corp. Ltd. (DHFL) in 2017-18. In four separate orders, NFRA levied a fine of ₹1 lakh each on the auditors – Mathew Samuel, Sam Varghese, Harish Kumar T.K. and M. Baskaran. The auditors are partners of audit firm K. Varghese & Co. PTI

Rakhi, critical drugs imports eased

New foreign trade policy allows duty-free import of life-saving drugs and Rakhis as 'gifts'; Rakhis will attract zero customs duty for cases where the relevant levy is ₹100 or less; gifts related to Rakhi, though, will attract levies

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

It may become easier to receive Rakhis and life-saving drugs as gifts from relatives or friends abroad, under India's new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), even though it has tightened provisions for other gifts from overseas, including those purchased from global e-commerce portals.

As per the 2015-20 trade policy, import of gifts was free in case of goods that are otherwise freely importable under India's foreign trade classification norms.

Gifts from abroad

Under the new FTP, duty-free clearance for gift imports allowed only for life-saving drugs and Rakhi but not Rakhi gifts

- In the past, 'gifts' were misused, to import goods without duty payment
- But policy doesn't define 'life-saving drugs'; more clarity needed
- Also, there isn't any monetary limit for the gift. Defining a threshold, such as ₹50,000 per importer p.a. will help

Any other imports required an authorisation from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

Under the new FTP effective this month, "import of goods, including those purchased from e-commerce portals, through post or courier, where Customs clearance is sought as gifts, is prohibited except for life saving drugs/ medicines and Rakhi (but not gifts related to Rakhi)."

"Import of goods as gifts with payment of full applicable duties is allowed," as per the new policy. Rakhis as gifts will attract zero customs duty where the relevant levy is ₹100 or less.

'Misuse of gift category'

"In the past, 'gifts' were being misused in a few instances, to import goods without any duty payment, and this was resulting in leakages and lower customs duty collection," RSM India director Siddharth Surana told *The Hindu*, explaining the rationale for seeking to tax all imports as gifts, barring Rakhis and life-saving medicines.

However, the policy doesn't define "life-saving drugs", so further clarity may be needed, Mr. Surana signalled. "The other pertinent aspect is that there does not seem to be any monetary limit for the gift and there would be a customs duty incidence on gifts irrespective of the amount. We believe defining a threshold, (say, ₹50,000 per importer per annum) would be imperative and we expect the government to do so."

Upcoming FTAs will boost India's exports: MoS for Commerce

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

The upcoming free trade agreements (FTA) with countries would boost exports from India including those from the chemicals sector, said Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel on Saturday.

"The chemicals industry is benefiting from the two FTAs that we have concluded. Now, we are proceeding with our negotiations with the U.K., the European Union, and Canada," she said.

"By year-end, we will be able to finalise FTAs with a few more countries and they are moving in the right direction because our intention is to create more balanced FTAs which could be favourable to both the countries and provide as much global access as possible to our exporters," she added. "So, we are quite hopeful that this year would be good for us in terms of some more FTAs being signed."

'Fastest-growing sector'

The Minister said that out of total exports of $770 billion achieved for FY23, the contribution of the chemicals industry is $30 billion. "The growth in chemicals export has been quite steady. It is the fastest-growing sector. In 2020-2021 it [exports] was $23 billion and for next year, it was $27 billion. Chemicals will make a huge contribution to overall exports," she said.

HDFC Bank Q4 net profit surges 20.6%

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

HDFC Bank on Saturday reported a 20.6% growth in consolidated net profit to ₹12,594.47 crore for the quarter ended March 2023.

The country's largest private-sector lender had reported a net profit of ₹10,443.01 crore for the January-March period a year ago and ₹12,698.32 crore in the preceding December quarter.

For FY23, the bank reported a net profit of ₹45,997.11 crore compared with ₹38,052.75 crore in the previous year.

On a standalone basis, the bank reported a 19.8% rise in net profit to ₹12,047.45 crore. Overall income grew to ₹53,850 crore compared with ₹41,086 crore in the year-earlier period.

Dip in provisions

The overall provisions for loan losses and other aspects stood at ₹2,685.37 crore for the reporting quarter. This compares with a figure of ₹3,312.35 crore a year earlier.

The gross non-performing assets ratio improved to 1.12% at the end of March 2023 from 1.17% a year earlier. The ration stood at 1.23% in December 2022.

Crypto-related issues need immediate attention: FM

Press Trust of India
WASHINGTON

Issues related to crypto assets required immediate attention and the response of the G20 had to ensure that they did not lose any potential benefits while protecting economies from harm, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said.

She was part of a brainstorming session on crypto assets with G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors at the IMF's headquarters here on Friday. The Minister noted that there was consensus among G20 members to have a globally coordinated policy response on crypto assets that takes into consideration the full range of risks, including those specific to emerging markets and developing economies.

Nirmala Sitharaman

"I am glad to say one thing: there is almost a clear understanding that anything outside the central bank is not a currency," she had said after the conclusion of FMCBG.

'Robust growth'

Observing that the International Monetary Fund and World Bank had estimated India to be the fastest-growing major economy in 2023, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Indian economy will stay on course and is likely to grow at 7% in 2022-23.

Ms. Sitharaman highlighted that a conducive domestic policy environment, along with the government's focus on structural reforms, had kept domestic economic activity in India 'robust'.

CREDAI allies with building council for 'green' projects

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI) has entered into a nationwide tie-up with the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), with a pledge to build more than 1,000 Certified Green Projects in the next two years and to construct 4,000 green projects by 2030 through adoption of IGBC Green and Net Zero building ratings.

This was announced at CREDAI's investiture ceremony where Boman Irani assumed presidency of CREDAI National for the 2023-25 term.

Air India to sport new cabin crew uniform, interiors soon

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Air India will soon have a new colour scheme and insignia that will decorate its aircraft along with new designs for cabin interiors and crew uniforms, CEO Campbell Wilson informed employees in an internal communication.

The CEO said that work on the designs was 'progressing well' and plans for their 'reveals' were being finalised. In an interview, recently, Mr. Wilson had indicated that while the iconic Maharajah may continue to be a part of the airline's mascot, it could also include a "she".

The airline will also announce new compensation packages for its cabin crew and pilots on Monday as well as a new rostering system, which Mr. Wilson said would increase "transparency, fairness, equity, roster stability, protection of golden offs [five-day offs on birthday and wedding anniversary] and reduce fatigue."

The airline has already announced plans to recruit 4,200 cabin crew and 900 pilots in 2023 – a shortage of whom had led to cancellation of six weekly flights to the U.S. for three months. There is also a worry that this crunch may widen as the airline starts inducting aircraft from its recent order of 470 planes with Airbus and Boeing.

While cuts introduced during COVID-19 were restored last September for most employees, pilots said they continued to see some cuts such as reduction of minimum pay equivalent of 70 hours to 20 hours. Many pilots also voiced concern that some were being removed from flying for training purposes for the newer kind of aircraft to be added to the airline's fleet, and were not being compensated for the loss of flying hours.

Passenger-vehicle sales for industry to hit 4 mn this calendar: Renault India

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Domestic passenger vehicle sales are expected to breach the 4-million mark during the calendar year (CY) 2023 despite several constraints, said Venkatram Mamillapalle, CEO and MD, Renault India.

"I am optimistic that the domestic Total Industry Volume (TIV) would cross the four-million mark due to a strong order book driven by pent-up demand due to a prolonged supply chain constraint, excitement around new launches, government's thrust on infrastructure development, drop in CNG prices, and stable and improved job markets," he said during an interaction.

Venkatram Mamillapalle

"The growth in TIV would lead to fluctuations in the percentage of market share of automakers, but there will be volume growth for all," he said.

Last year, the domestic market recorded passenger car sales of 3.8 million units with Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai Motor, Tata Motors, Mahindra, Kia India and Toyota Kirloskar recording 'good' growth.

However, he said the industry could face headwinds this year in the form of chip shortages due to China's Taiwan drill, traction in the electric vehicles market and upcoming general elections.

"The industry is facing semiconductor shortage, but it is not reflected in the supply chain. We are moving chips through precious flights to expedite shipment. If the problem continues for 4-5 months, then it will affect overall production," he cautioned.

Asked about the ongoing electrification transition, he said that original equipment manufacturers are expected to incur significant investments in the development of ground-up EV platforms and enhance manufacturing capacities. A lot of action is going to be seen on the EV front, he added.

Re-entry of Duster?

In 2022, Renault India sold 1.14 lakh cars (across the Kwid, Kiger and Triber models). This year, sales would be 'more or less' on the same lines, he said.

While hinting at the possibility of re-entry of its compact sport utility vehicle Duster with more features, he also said that the 800cc Kwid was discontinued recently as it did not conform with the BS-6 Step 2 emission norms.

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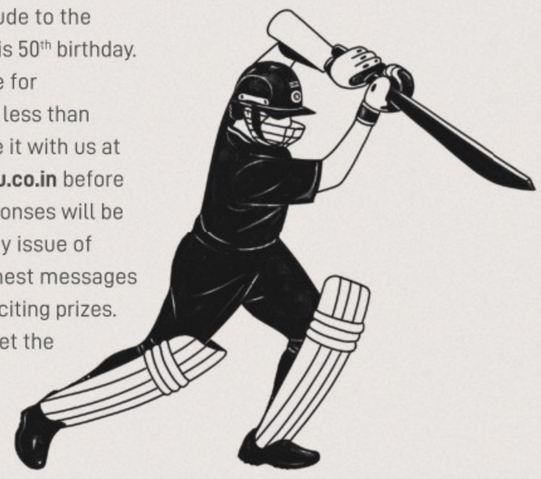
#50forSachin

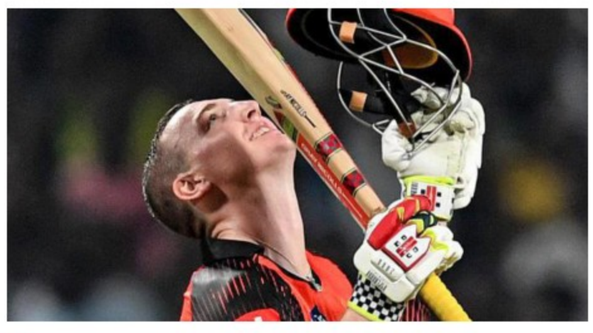


SPORTSTAR

A BG-BGE

ONE TO REMEMBER

Nice to have the 'I don't care mentality' come off, says Brook



"My experience in the IPL so far has been one to remember. I was doubting myself in the last few games but to go out there with a little bit of mentality that I don't care was really nice to have come off," said Harry Brook after his century set up SRH's win. He also credited England coach Brendon McCullum for his aggressive approach.

DRAFTED IN

Arpit Guleria to replace Mayank Yadav in LSG squad

Himachal Pradesh right-arm fast bowler Arpit Guleria will replace injured pacer Mayank Yadav in the Lucknow Super Giants squad for the remainder of the Indian Premier League, the organisers announced on Saturday. It is a like-for-like replacement for LSG, but the IPL statement did not clarify what exactly the injury was.

STAR ATTRACTION

Fans of every team want to see runs from Kohli: Gavaskar

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar believes Virat Kohli's form this season will boost RCB's chances of finishing in the top four. "This year RCB's claim is on Virat Kohli. If he plays well, then the chances of RCB winning increase. Virat is one of the biggest superstars and fans of every team want to see runs coming out of his bat."

FIGHTING TO GET FIT

Bumrah begins rehab; Shreyas set to undergo back surgery

Jasprit Bumrah is "pain free" and has begun his rehab at the NCA in Bengaluru following a successful surgery on his lower back in New Zealand, the BCCI said on Saturday. Shreyas Iyer will undergo surgery for his lower back issue next week. It remains to be seen if Bumrah will be fit for India's WTC final against Australia in two months' time.

Pacers drive RCB to a comfortable win over Capitals

Right-arm pacer Vyshak leads the way with an impressive spell; Kohli gets a handy half-century but the hosts struggle to get going in the PowerPlay; visitors continue to lie at the bottom of the table

IPL-16

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) got back to winning ways, beating Delhi Capitals (DC) by 23 runs at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Saturday.

Asked to bat first, the home side made 174 – a score which seemed underwhelming at the break – before its bowlers made it an evening to remember. For DC though, the agony piled, for it was a fifth consecutive defeat.

With appreciable swing and seam movement, RCB pacers reduced the visitors to two for three. Prithvi Shaw was run out by a brilliant throw from cover by an off-balance Anuj Rawat. Mitchell Marsh was caught off a leading edge and Yash Dhull trapped in front by Mohammed Siraj.

David Warner (19, 13b) hit Siraj for a hat-trick of fours, but soon miscued a pull to became local lad V. Vyshak's maiden IPL victim. The right-arm pacer went on to scalp the in-form Axar Patel, and eventually finished with impressive figures of 4-0-20-3 on debut.

Manish Pandey resisted (50, 38b, 5x4, 1x6), but the contest was virtually over when Wanindu Hasaranga got a leg-before decision overturned to send the Karnataka batter back.

Earlier, RCB rode on Virat Kohli's 50 (34b, 6x4, 1x6) but had a forgettable PowerPlay, scoring just 47 runs and struggling against spin (16 runs from three overs).

Kohli got things moving, slapping Kuldeep Yadav for a four, creaming Mustafizur Rahman past long-off and flicking the left-arm pacer for a six before bringing up his half-century (33b).

But he fell to Lalit Yadav in the 11th over, hitting a full toss straight to deep mid-wicket. Not long after, Kuldeep removed Glenn Maxwell and Dinesh Karthik off consecutive deliveries, with the former foxed by a googly.

With RCB 132 for six, Rawat was brought in as the Impact Player. Runs didn't come at a fast clip – only four boundaries in the last six overs – but the 42-run partnership with Shahbaz Ahmed provided the RCB bowlers enough cushion to wreak havoc later.

Superlative performance: RCB's Vyshak celebrates after scalping Lalit Yadav. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

Points Table

	M	W	L	Pts	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	4	3	1	6	1.588
Lucknow Super Giants	5	3	2	6	0.761
Gujarat Titans	4	3	1	6	0.341
Punjab Kings	5	3	2	6	-0.109
Kolkata Knight Riders	4	2	2	4	0.711
Chennai Super Kings	4	2	2	4	0.225
Royal Challengers Bangalore	4	2	2	4	-0.316
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	2	2	4	-0.822
Mumbai Indians	3	1	2	2	-0.879
Delhi Capitals	5	0	5	0	-1.488

After the LSG-PBKS match on April 15

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

Virat Kohli c Dhull b Lalit 50 *(34b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Faf du Plessis c Aman b Marsh 22 *(16b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Mahipal Lomror c Porel b Marsh 26 *(18b, 2x6)*, Glenn Maxwell c Warner b Kuldeep 24 *(14b, 3x6)*, Harshal Patel c Porel b Axar 6 *(4b, 1x6)*, Shahbaz Ahmed (not out) 20 *(12b, 3x4)*, Dinesh Karthik c Lalit b Kuldeep 0 *(1b)*, Anuj Rawat **(Impact Player in place of Mahipal Lomror)** (not out) 15 *(22b, 1x4)*; Extras (b-1, lb-6, nb-1, w-3): 11; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 174.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-42 (du Plessis, 4.4 overs), 2-89 (Kohli, 10.1), 3-117 (Lomror, 12.3), 4-132 (Harshal, 13.6), 5-132 (Maxwell, 14.1), 6-132 (Karthik, 14.2).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Nortje 4-0-31-0, Axar 3-0-25-1, Mustafizur 3-0-41-0, Marsh 2-0-18-2, Lalit 4-0-29-1, Kuldeep 4-1-23-2.

DELHI CAPITALS

David Warner c Kohli b Vyshak 19 *(13b, 4x4)*, Prithvi Shaw **(Impact Player in place of Mustafizur Rahman)** run out 0 *(2b)*, Mitchell Marsh c Kohli b Parnell 0 *(4b)*, Yash Dhull lbw b Siraj 1 *(4b)*, Manish Pandey lbw b Hasaranga 50 *(38b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Abhishek Porel c Parnell b Harshal 5 *(8b)*, Axar Patel c Siraj b Vyshak 21 *(14b, 3x4)*, Aman Khan c Kohli b Siraj 18 *(10b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Lalit Yadav c Maxwell b Vyshak 4 *(7b)*, Anrich Nortje (not out) 23 *(14b, 4x4)*, Kuldeep Yadav (not out) 7 *(6b, 1x4)*; Extras (w-3): 3; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 151.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-1 (Prithvi, 0.4 overs), 2-1 (Marsh, 1.4), 3-2 (Dhull, 2.2), 4-30 (Warner, 5.4), 5-53 (Porel, 8.5), 6-80 (Axar, 12.2), 7-98 (Manish, 13.6), 8-110 (Lalit, 15.5), 9-128 (Aman, 17.3).

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BOWLING

Siraj 4-0-23-2, Parnell 4-0-28-1, Vyshak 4-0-20-3, Shahbaz 1-0-11-0, Hasaranga 3-0-37-1, Harshal 4-0-32-1.

Toss: Capitals; **PoM:** Kohli.
Royal Challengers won by 23 runs

Next assignment

RCB: April 17 vs. CSK
Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

DC: April 20 vs. KKR
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

A dream to be playing for RCB: Vyshak

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

There was a long-standing quibble among fans of RCB that they did not have a local player to connect with.

On Saturday, pacer V. Vyshak quenched that thirst with an impressive debut (4-0-20-3) in the 23-run victory over Delhi Capitals, that included the prized wickets of David Warner and Axar Patel.

"I feel like I am on top of the world," Vyshak said. "Warner is one of the greatest batters, and taking his wicket, that too for my first in IPL, was great."

Vyshak was ignored at the IPL mini auction held last December and was then included as a net bowler for RCB. He came into the main squad only as a replacement for the injured batter Rajat Patidar.

"I was very disappointed when my name didn't come up in the auction because I had done well in the (Syed) Mushtaq Ali (T20) tournament (15 wkts, fifth-highest).

"But that's how auctions go. When RCB called me (to be a net bowler) I wanted to know if I belonged to this stage because I was bowling to Virat [Kohli] bhai and all other great batters. I think I did well enough for them to give me this opportunity. For a Bangalore guy, it is a dream to be playing for RCB. I was lucky to be playing in front of 40,000 people. There were nerves, but only for a few balls. After that, I felt I deserved to be here."

Raza and Shahrukh orchestrate Kings' victory over Super Giants

Ayan Acharya
LUCKNOW

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) captain K.L. Rahul will look back at Saturday night's two-wicket defeat against Punjab Kings (PBKS) at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow with a curious smile. His 56-ball 74, though the bedrock of his team's innings, once again raised questions about his status as a vintage car among Ferraris in the format.

But his move to hold back leggie Ravi Bishnoi, on a wicket where the ball gripped and turned, till the 15th over nearly proved to be a masterstroke; what with figures of 2 for 10 after two overs. But with seven needed from six, Bishnoi stuttered as PBKS rode on Shahrukh Khan's blockbuster 10-ball 23 and player-of-the-match Sikandar Raza's 41-ball 57 to snap its losing streak.

Bishnoi had accounted for PBKS stand-in captain Sam Curran – Dhawan was out with a niggle – in his first over before getting Raza caught. Bishnoi's guile was matched by Mark Wood's hard lengths at express pace but the lack of a flourishing finish while batting cost LSG dearly.

Revival

Earlier, with PBKS 82 for four in 12 overs, Raza had breathed life back into a dwindling chase when he took 17 off Krunal Pandya in the 13th over, with two sixes and a four. His riposte ultimately orchestrated PBKS's third win in five matches. In the evening, watching LSG openers go about their business, after being invited to take first strike, in the PowerPlay was an exercise in deciphering two contrasting T20 batting philosophies.

Taking control: Raza's well-paced knock was studded with some delightful strokes. AFP

On one hand, Kyle Mayers smacked sixes while on the other, Rahul batted to the rhythms of his slow-burn T20 form.

Rahul's feat

Rahul reached his fifty off 40 balls and, along the way, became the fastest to 4000 IPL runs (105 innings). Sandwiched in between were the dismissals of Mayers and Deepak Hooda, who fell in successive overs.

With LSG 108 for two in 14 overs, the crowd expected an avalanche of sixes but Rabada's twin strikes in the 15th over, removing Krunal Pandya and Nicholas Pooran, snuffed out hopes of a fightback.

Next assignment

LSG: April 19 vs. RR
Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

PBKS: April 20 vs. RCB
Mohali, 3.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

K.L. Rahul c sub (Ellis) b Arshdeep 74 *(56b, 8x4, 1x6)*, Kyle Mayers c Harpreet Singh b Harpreet Brar 29 *(23b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Deepak Hooda lbw b Raza 2 *(3b)*, Krunal Pandya c Shahrukh b Rabada 18 *(17b, 2x4)*, Nicholas Pooran c Shahrukh b Rabada 0 *(1b)*, Marcus Stoinis c Jitesh b Curran 15 *(11b, 2x6)*, Ayush Badoni (not out) 5 *(6b)*, K. Gowtham **(Impact Player in place of Mayers)** c Raza b Curran 1 *(2b)*, Yudhvir Singh c Shahrukh b Curran 0 *(1b)*, Ravi Bishnoi (not out) 3 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-5, w-6, nb-1): 12; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 159.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-53 (Mayers, 7.4 overs), 2-62 (Hooda, 8.4), 3-110 (Krunal, 14.2), 4-111 (Pooran, 14.3), 5-142 (Stoinis, 17.5), 6-150 (Rahul, 18.4), 7-154 (Gowtham, 19.3), 8-154 (Yudhvir, 19.4).

KINGS BOWLING

Short 2-0-10-0, Arshdeep 3-0-22-1, Rabada 4-0-34-2, Curran 4-0-31-3, Brar 2-0-10-1, Raza 2-0-19-1, Chahar 3-0-28-0.

PUNJAB KINGS

Atharva Taide c Avesh b Yudhvir 0 *(3b)*, Prabhsimran Singh **(Impact Player in place of Rahul Chahar)** b Yudhvir 4 *(4b, 1x4)*, Matthew Short c Stoinis b Gowtham 34 *(22, 5x4, 1x6)*, Harpreet Singh c sub (Mankad) b Krunal 22 *(22b, 3x4)*, Sikandar Raza c Stoinis b Bishnoi 57 *(41b, 4x4, 3x6)*, Sam Curran c Krunal b Bishnoi 6 *(6b, 1x4)*, Jitesh Sharma c Rahul b Wood 2 *(4b)*, Shahrukh Khan (not out) 23 *(10b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Harpreet Brar c Pooran b Wood 6 *(4b, 1x4)*, Kagiso Rabada (not out) 0 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-2, w-5): 7; Total (for eight wkts. in 19.3 overs): 161.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Taide, 0.3 overs), 2-17 (Prabhsimran, 2.2), 3-45 (Short, 5.6), 4-75 (Harpreet, 10.6), 5-112 (Curran, 14.3), 6-122 (Jitesh, 15.5), 7-139 (Raza, 17.5), 8-153 (Brar, 18.5).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING

Yudhvir 3-0-19-2, Avesh 3-0-24-0, Wood 4-0-35-2, Gowtham 4-0-31-1, Krunal 3-0-32-1, Bishnoi 2.3-0-18-2.

Toss: Kings; **PoM:** Raza.
Kings won by two wickets with three balls to spare.

'We knew Brook was going to do something like this'

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

It was Sunrisers Hyderabad's head coach and West Indian great Brian Lara who planned to promote destructive English batter Harry Brook as an opener against Kolkata Knight Riders and the team benefited from it on Friday.

Brook's hundred, propelled SRH to post this edition's highest aggregate of 228 for four. Sunrisers went on to defeat Knight Riders by 23 runs.

Sunrisers all-rounder Abhishek Sharma, who played against Brook during his under-19 days and added 72 runs with the Englishman, said his team always supported Brook.

"Harry could not perform in two-three matches, so it was in Brian (Lara)'s mind that we will bring him up and I will go in the middle so that I can take on the spinners," said Abhishek, who made a comeback after recovering from an injury.

"We all knew that Brook was going to do something like this soon. It was just a matter of time. His Test batting is like T20. He can take on any pace attack. That was a very good decision by the coach and the management."

KKR skipper Nitish Rana backed Andre Russell who developed cramps during the match due to dehydration in hot and humid conditions.

Taking wing: Haaland is ecstatic after netting his 32nd league goal of the season. GETTY IMAGES

Record-setting Haaland helps City heap pressure on Arsenal

EURO LEAGUES

Agencies
MANCHESTER

Erling Haaland equalled the Premier League record for goals in a 38-game season as Manchester City closed the gap on leader Arsenal to just three points on Saturday.

The Norway forward netted twice in the first half of City's 3-1 win over relegation-threatened Leicester to reach 32 goals, the same as Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah's tally in 2017/18.

Tottenham Hotspur had the chance to move into the top four but blew it as Bournemouth took a potentially decisive step towards survival with a 3-2 verdict, while Brighton boosted its chances of European football with a 2-1 win at Chelsea.

In the Bundesliga, Borussia Dortmund failed to take advantage of Bayern Munich's 1-1 home draw against Hoffenheim on Saturday, blowing a two-goal lead against 10-man Stuttgart before conceding a last-gasp equaliser.

The results: Premier League: Aston Villa 3 (Ramsey 11, Watkins 64, 83) bt Newcastle 0; Chelsea 1 (Gallagher 13) lost to Brighton 2 (Welbeck 42, Enciso 69); Everton 1 (McNeil 35) lost to Fulham 3 (Reed 22, Wilson 51, James 68); Southampton 0 lost to Crystal Palace 2 (Eze 54, 68); Wolves 2 (Costa 27, Hwang Hee-Chan 69) bt Brentford 0; Manchester City 3 (Stones 5, Haaland 13-pen, 25) bt Leicester 1 (Iheanacho 75); Tottenham 2 (Son 14, Danjuma 88) lost to Bournemouth 3 (Vina 38, Solanke 51, Ouattara 90+5).

Bundesliga: Bayern Munich 1 (Pavard 17) drew with Hoffenheim 1 (Kramaric 71); RB Leipzig 3 (Kampl 10, Werner 32, 35) bt Augsburg 2 (Maier 5, Vargas 82); Stuttgart 3 (Coulibaly 77, Vagnoman 84, Katompa Mvumpa 90+7) drew with Borussia Dortmund 3 (Haller 26, Malen 33, Reyna 90+2).

LaLiga: Villarreal 1 (Capoue 74) Real Valladolid 2 (Amallah 2, El Yamiq 34); Athletic Bilbao 2 (Inaki Williams 33, 70) bt Real Sociedad 0; Real Betis 3 (Perez 27, Miranda 34, Carvalho 69) bt Espanyol 1 (Montes 48)

Serie A: Bologna 1 (Sansone 1) drew with AC Milan 1 (Pobega 40); Napoli 0 drew with Verona 0

INBRIEF

Gilchrist and Hall have it easy in their opening matches

Peter Gilchrist of Singapore, *in pic.*, and Rob Hall of England won their respective opening group matches in the ₹10 lakh prize-money CCI Classic invitation billiards (time format) championship, organised by CCI in Mumbai on Saturday. Pankaj Advani survived a scare before defeating Loukic Pathare.

Important results (Indians unless specified): Group-A: Pankaj Advani bt Loukic Pathare 627-499; **B:** Peter Gilchrist (Sin) bt Rishabh Kumar 1042-305; Ashok Shandilya bt K. Venkatesh 608-285; **C:** Rob Hall (UK) bt Kanishk Jhanjaria 1250-160; Rob Hall bt V. Subramaniam 735-431; V. Subramaniam bt Rayaan Razmi 458-346. **D:** Aditya Agrawal bt Sunil Jain 567-376; **E:** Rupesh Shah bt Arun Agrawal 761-311; Arun Agrawal bt Devendra Joshi 583-370; **H:** Rohan Jambasuria bt Vishal Madan 536-404; Sourav Kothari bt Mehul Sutaria 641-297; **G:** Ketan bt Mahesh Jagdale 609-444.

Pakistan thrashes NZ in Babar's landmark match

Pakistan celebrated skipper Babar Azam's 100th international match in the shortest format with a clinical 88-run win in the first Twenty20 against New Zealand here on Friday. Azam failed, scoring just nine runs, but Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub scored 47 each to anchor Pakistan to 182 all out in 19.5 overs.

The scores: Pakistan 182 in 19.5 overs (Fakhar Zaman 47, Saim Ayub 47, Matt Henry 3/32, Ben Lister 2/30, Adam Milne 2/51) bt New Zealand 94 in 15.3 overs (Mark Chapman 34. Haris Rauf 4/17, Imad Wasim 2/2).
Toss: Pakistan.
Pakistan won by 88 runs to lead five-match series 1-0.

Anirudh clinches freestyle bronze in Asian wrestling

Anirudh Kumar (125kg) claimed bronze in the freestyle competitions of the Asian wrestling championships in Astana, defeating Uzbekistan's Sardorbek Kholmatov 12-2 in the bronze medal match. World championships silver medallist Deepak Punia (92kg), who beat China's Xiao Sun 8-1, lost 0-5 to Bahrain's Magomed Sharipov in the quarterfinals. Indian freestyle wrestlers collected a gold medal and two bronzes.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: MTV, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 6 a.m.
Sri Lanka vs Ireland: 1st Test, day 1, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10 a.m.
World Chess championship: FIDE & *Chess.com YouTube* channels, 2.30 p.m. onwards
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 4, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Monday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Monday)
ATP: Monte Carlo Masters, Sony LIV, 6 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 6.30 & 9 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7, 9 p.m. & 11 p.m.
Super Cup football: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 8.30 p.m.

Last year's finalists face off in key clash

With plenty of recent history between the sides, both will look to gain an edge over the other in a potential high-voltage affair

IPL-16

Amol Karhadkar
AHMEDABAD

It's the repeat of last year's Indian Premier League final. It's the return of Rajasthan Royals to a city that has been its makeshift home earlier. And it's Rahul Tewatia's, Gujarat Titans' ace finisher's, face-off against his former team.

No wonder then that Sunday night's Indian Premier League clash between Gujarat Titans and the Royals will be a high-voltage affair.

Think tank: Titans coach Nehra and skipper Hardik will have to work out a plan to contain Royals' in-form batters. VIJAY SONEJI

Homecoming of sorts

Before playing the last two games of IPL 2022 here, the Royals had used the Motera stadium – before its renovation and rechristening – as one of its home grounds in 2010, 2014 and 2015. As a result, it will be a sort of homecoming for the boys in pink.

As a result, despite the last year's three encounters - including both the Qualifiers - going in Titans' favour, both the camps shared positive vibes while training simultaneously at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Saturday evening.

Seeking a response

Despite being involved in a jovial mood, the Royals will be desperate to avenge the loss in the final – at the same venue – last year and record its first win against Hardik Pandya and Co.

The onus will be on the top-order, with Jos Buttler and Yashasvi Jaiswal in marauding form, to set the foundation.

The home crowd, however, will be gunning for Tewatia, who earlier in the week showcased his finishing abilities, to mete out the same treatment to his former team, where he actually emerged as a reliable finisher during IPL 2020.

Can Knight Riders break the Wankhede jinx?

Shayan Acharya
MUMBAI

Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians have locked horns at the Wankhede Stadium on nine occasions, of which the home team has won eight times.

KKR hasn't been able to break the jinx at the iconic venue since 2012, but when the two teams square off in an IPL clash on Sunday, KKR will be hoping for a change in its fortunes.

So far in the tournament, the Kolkata side has had two wins and as many defeats, whereas Mumbai Indians have suffered two defeats in the first three games.

With Rinku Singh in red-hot form – with scores of unbeaten 48 and 58 in his last two outings, batting at No. 7 – Knight Riders is confident of setting the record straight against the Rohit Sharma-led MI.

Despite KKR going down to Sunrisers Hyderabad in a high-scoring home game, Rinku and captain Nitish Rana fought valiantly and would look to keep the momentum going. Andre Russell's form has been a concern for Knight Riders. It also needs to be seen whether Jason Roy takes the place of Rahmanullah Gurbaz.

Job on hand: MI's Suryakumar will hope to regain his form. EMMANUAL YOGINI

TODAY'S MATCHES

MUMBAI INDIANS vs. KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS	GUJARAT TITANS vs. RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Mumbai, 3.30 p.m.	**Ahmedabad,** 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD	HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 31	Played: 3
MI 22 | KKR 9	GT 3 | RR 0
PREVIOUS MEETING	PREVIOUS MEETING
KKR won by 52 runs, 2022	GT won by seven wickets, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Returning to winning ways against Delhi Capitals, Mumbai Indians will be without Jofra Archer and in his absence, the focus will be on Jason Behrendorff. Piyush Chawla will handle the spin department.

After a match-winning 65 against DC, captain Rohit needs to be consistent as the tournament progresses. Suryakumar Yadav has gone through a lean patch and as the batter works hard to find his mojo, Cameron Green and Tilak Varma need to steady the middle-order.

Shaili uncorks the second longest jump by an Indian woman

INDIAN GP-4

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Shaili Singh stole the show with a brilliant 6.76m leap in the women's long jump event in the Indian Grand Prix-4 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Saturday.

Shaili recorded the second best women's long jump performance by an Indian, behind Anju Bobby George's 6.83m National record set in the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Anju, now the Senior Vice-President of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), applauded Shaili's effort on Saturday from the stadium stands. Shaili is coached by Anju's husband Robert Bobby George.

Shaili's jump was well above the qualifying standard of 6.45m set for the Asian Games. Kerala's Nayana James (6.53m), who finished second, also bettered the qualifying standard.

Fantastic feat: Shaili flies through the air during her incredible effort in the long jump. K. MURALI KUMAR

Double for Amlan

Amlan Borgohain took gold in the men's 100m and 200m events. This is Amlan's second successive sprint double, having achieved the feat in the Indian Grand Prix-3 held at the same venue earlier this week.

In men's javelin, Karnataka's D.P. Manu and Uttar Pradesh's Rohit Yadav crossed the 80m-mark. Manu took gold with 84.33m, while Rohit claimed silver with a 81.81m effort.

The results (winners): Men: 100m: Amlan Borgohain (Asm), 10.53s; **200m:** Amlan Borgohain (Asm), 20.78; **400m:** Sumit Kumar (U.P.), 48.13; **1,500m:** Krishan Kumar (Har), 3:49.96; **3,000m steeplechase:** Bhupal Singh (Utk) 9:36.06; **5,000m:** Gulveer Singh (U.P.), 14:08.33.

Long jump: Muhammed Anees (Ker), 7.87m; **high jump:** Aadarsh Ram (TN), 2.10; **triple jump:** Mohammed Salahuddin (TN), 15.77; **javelin:** D.P. Manu (Kar), 84.33; **shot put:** Tajinderpal Singh Toor (Pun), 21.20.

Women: 100m: Archana Suseendran (TN), 11.79s; **200m:** Jyothi Yarraji (AP), 23.60; **400m:** Dandi Jyothika (AP), 54.15; **1,500m:** C.M. Rashi (Kar), 4:41.58; **400m hurdles:** Dandi Jyothika (AP), 54.15; **5,000m:** Ankita (Utk), 16:08.78.

Long jump: Shaili Singh (U.P.), 6.76m; **triple jump:** Anjani Kumari (Bih), 47.03; **javelin:** Anjani Kumar (Bih), 47.03; **pole vault:** Baranica Elangovan (TN), 4.10; **shot put:** Manpreet Kaur (Har), 16.81.

TENNIS ROUND-UP

Rublev rallies past Fritz, enters Monte Carlo final

Andrey Rublev battled back from a set down to beat big-serving American Taylor Fritz on Saturday and reach his second Monte Carlo Masters final. Russian fifth seed Rublev claimed a 5-7, 6-1, 6-3 victory in the match that was interrupted by a long rain delay.

Anirudh & Vijay in doubles title round

Anirudh Chandrasekar and Vijay Sundar Prashanth got two successive walkover to make the doubles final of the €73,000 Challenger tennis tournament in Split, Croatia.

The results: €73,000 Challenger, Madrid: Semifinals: Patrik Niklas-Salminen (Fin) & Bart Stevens (Ned) bt Sriram Balaji & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan 1-6, 6-3, [10-8]; **Quarterfinals:** Balaji & Jeevan bt Miguel Damas & Alejandro Moro Canas (Esp) 7-6(4), 6-4.

India loses to Korea, but stays in Billie Jean Cup group-1

India lost its last league match to Korea 1-2 but managed to finish fourth ahead of Thailand in the Asia-Oceania Billie Jean King Cup women's tennis tournament in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on Saturday.

Both India and Thailand had tied with two wins each, but India took the fourth place behind Japan, Korea and China, on the basis of having beaten Thailand earlier.

The victory for Korea against India was crucial as it helped the team stay in the race for second qualification spot behind Japan. Korea had beaten China, which needed to beat Japan in the last league match to earn the second qualifcation spot.

The results (league): Korea bt India 2-1 (Kim Dabin bt Vaidehi Chaudhari 2-6, 6-4, 6-4; Ku Yeon Woo lost to Rutuja Bhosale 5-7, 6-2, 2-6; Choi Jee Hee & Kim Dabin bt Rutuja & Ankita Raina 6-4, 2-6, 6-3).

Gavaskar recalls Ranji Trophy moment with football legend Chuni Goswami

GENERAL

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

On a day that Mohun Bagan Club decided to dedicate its ornate entry gate to the memory of its legendary captain Chuni Goswami, the commemorative occasion was made special by the presence of one of the brightest luminaries of Indian sport, Sunil Gavaskar, who did the inauguration. The occasion coincided with the Bengali New Year's day, which is traditionally observed as the propitious time to start the new season of football in the city.

While conveying his New Year wishes to everyone in Bengali, Gavaskar recounted his deep bonding with the city's sporting fraternity and his association with Chuni Goswami as a cricketer. Goswami, who led the Bengal Ranji team to the final in 1972, had one century to his name in his fairy long First Class cricket career. Gavaskar confessed that he was instrumental in "Chuni Da" not getting another.

Honouring a hero: Gavaskar inaugurated the Chuni Goswami Gate in the presence of the latter's wife Basanti. DEBASISH BHADURI

"I had the good fortune of playing against him in the Ranji Trophy where I must confess, so many years down the road, that I had him dismissed with a catch which was not there. I had taken the catch on the half-volley in the slips when he was batting at 96. You generally signal it as not a catch to the umpire but before I could do it one my senior players standing in the gully rushed to hug me and said 'Sunny don't do it he (Goswami) is batting well,'" Gavaskar made the revelation to a big applause from the gathering of former players, fans and members of Mohun Bagan.

"I walked back denying Chuni Da a 100, that too against Mumbai. I told that to Chuni Da many years later but he accepted that in good spirit saying 'maybe it was not in my fortune to get a 100 against you'.

"That was the greatness of Chuni Da and I feel honoured to be inaugurating the gate named after one of the biggest icons of Indian football," he added.

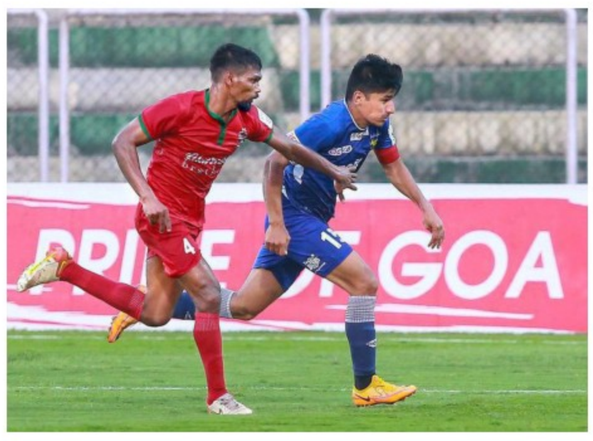
Chennaiyin FC fails to breach the Churchill Brothers' defence

SUPER CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
MANJERI

It may have netted four goals against fellow-ISL side NorthEast United in its opening match, but Chennaiyin FC failed to score one against the I-League team Churchill Brothers on Saturday. The goalless draw in the Group D match thus earned Churchill its first point in the Super Cup.

It was a well-deserved point too for the Goan side, which fought hard against its formidable rival. It defended superbly right through to deny the Chennaiyin forwards. Joseph Clemente was the standout performer in the Churchill defence.



Pulling his weight: Clemente, left, stood out in the Churchill defence against Chennaiyin on Saturday. SAKEER HUSSAIN

Churchill had been reduced to 10 men towards the end when Richard Costa was sent off after getting a second yellow card. Chennaiyin could not take advantage of that, just as it could not of all the chances it created right through the game or the much bigger percentage of possession (63).

Chennaiyin had 17 shots at goal (against seven of Churchill) and got 10 corners (against five). It was indeed that kind of a day for the team from Chennai.

Right from the beginning, Aakash Sangwan was initiating some threatening moves for Chennaiyin on the left side. In the eighth minute, he gave a superb pass to Edwin Vanspaul, who failed to connect it.

Though Churchill was forced to defend for much of the match, it created some scoring opportunities, too, especially for Ansumana Kromah. Poor finishing was one of the themes of the match.

NEUFC bests Mumbai

Later, NorthEast United defeated Mumbai City 2-1. The winner led 1-0 at half-time.

The results: Chennaiyin FC 0 drew with Churchill Brothers 0. NorthEast United 2 (Wilmar Jordan Gil 32- pen & 50) bt Mumbai City 1 (Lalengmawia Ralte 85).